ADVENTURES OF BOB

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MIDSHIPMAN BOB,

BY

E. L. DORSEY.

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By D. E. Hudson.

DEDICATION.

TO BOYS IN GENERAL, BUT PARTICULARLY
TO THOSE WHO ARE PLUCKILY
FIGHTING THEIR WAY AGAINST THE WORLD, THE FLESH
AND THE DEVIL,
TOWARDS A MANHOOD WORTHY OF THEIR FAITH,
THEIR COUNTRY AND THEMSELVES,
THIS VOLUME IS CORDIALLY DEDICATED.

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Midshipman Bob.

PART I.

I.

We were at our wits' end. Bob, the only grandson in the family, had been East to visit our oldest brother, and had come home wild about the sea. He dreamed of it, he talked of it; he devoured Cooper, Marryatt, and Mayne Reid; he routed in junk-shops, until his room was an armory of old swords, cutlasses, and pistols; he bought prints of ships at every possible angle of sailing, and his portfolio was bursting with pictures of sea-fights.

But this was simply the prelude to our woe. He declared he was going to be a sailor, and the only thing that kept him from rushing off immediately was that he could not make up his mind whether to ship

aboard a whaler and go to the frozen North, or a fruit-vessel bound for the tropics, or (and this was his favorite) to go out to China to fight pirates!

We argued, we pleaded, we begged, we implored; but the louder our eloquence waxed the more his brown eyes would flash, his chin square itself, and his very curls look rebellious. Not that he *said* much: he was too good a boy for that; but we could get no promise from him, nor could we persuade him to give up the project.

In the midst of our perplexity we made our usual summer move to our country home, which was so far removed from the city that we heard Mass only when Father McDonald could be spared from his small parish church at Shrewsbury, or his chapel at Whitfield, or his mission at Townley. Whenever he came, there was great rejoicing; and, as we always had the pleasure of entertaining him, we would notify the Catholic neighbors the day before "Lætare Sunday" (as we called our Mass-day), and

quite a little congregation would assemble to assist at the Holy Sacrifice and go to confession and Holy Communion.

We heard the priest was due the Sunday after our arrival; and, as he was a prime favorite of Bob's, we determined to lay our trouble before him. Imagine, then, our disappointment when a strange priest presented himself, saying Father McDonald was ill, and had asked him to take his place. He was a square-shouldered man, with blue eyes, a bronzed face, and an indescribable something in his walk that suggested the open air (and plenty of it) and military training. His manner was simple and direct, and as one after the other of us went to confession, we were so impressed by his sturdy common sense that we concluded to talk to him about Bob as frankly as we would have done to Father McDonald.

At breakfast, the favorable impression was deepened; and, better still, he won our boy by a hearty answer, and an interested discussion about lacrosse; so much so, that

after we had finished our meal he invited "Father Jerome" (as he bade us call him) to go up to his "cabin" (otherwise bedroom) and see his "collection." Always polite, the dear boy turned to his mother and myself and asked us to go too; she excused herself, but I thanked him and went, thinking it a good opportunity to approach the subject nearest our hearts.

As we entered, the priest said, in a hearty voice: "Why, this is famous! Did you do it all yourself!"

"Yes, Father," said Bob, flushing with pride.

"I haven't seen such a neat cabin since I was aboard the old *Cumberland*."

"The *Cumberland!*" cried Bob, eager, breathless.

"Yes: I was aboard of her when she went down."

"Oh, were you—were you? Sit down here on this locker, please, and tell me about it"; and he grasped Father Jerome's arm, literally gasping with excitement.

"But, my lad, it's a long yarn, and I must not trespass on the time of your mother and aunt."

"Father," I answered, honestly enough (although my heart sank a trifle at the rather inauspicious beginning), "the longer you can stay, the happier we shall be; and if you will spare time to tell our boy the story, we will all feel obliged to you for your kindness."

"Very well," he said, and without more ado he seated himself on the locker, and, after several keen glances at the eager boy, the room and its decorations, and my anxious face, he began:

"When I was about fourteen years old I was wild to go to sea. My father was dead, and my mother and brothers lived on a little farm in Northern Ohio. We worked hard and lived simply, for we were very poor, and I soon got tired of it; and, after making my mother miserable, and my brothers angry, I ran off in the middle of the harvest, to work and tramp my way to New York. All the

way on the road the sad face of my mother, with its lines of care and eyes full of tears, was before me; her brown hands, that were hard with labor, and yet so tender, seemed to be drawing me back at every step; but I hardened my heart, and went ahead doggedly, declaring I wouldn't go back, and I wouldn't write until I had done something famous; and then I slipped off into dreams of glory and gunpowder.

"The war had broken out the spring before, and the villages on the road were full of soldiers, drilling, marching, hurrahing; and sometimes I almost thought I'd like to go into the army, but a little reflection would leave me as sea-mad as ever.

"I got into New York, dirty, hungry, and almost stunned by the noises and the rush of the crowd. I clung to the railings near Union Square, sick and disheartened. The stream went by, and I stared stupidly at it, until rolling down the street, with a genuine sea-walk, came an old sailor, togged out in a new suit of blue and white, with his hat

balanced on the back of his head at a most surprising angle. I let go my hold and rushed up to him, and gave his sleeve a stout tug.

"'Ahoy!' he shouted. 'What have we here!'

"'Oh, please, sir!' I gasped.

"'What d'ye want, my lad? Speak out!' And he stopped, and gave his trowsers a hitch, and shifted his quid of tobacco, just as the sailors in stories always do; but somehow in real life it scared me, and I only stared at him. I suppose I looked miserable enough, for he patted me on the shoulder, and said:

"'Cheer up, and take yer time. Hungry?'

"I shook my head.

"'Lost?'

"This time I glared, for he was treating me like a child. My temper braced me up and steadied me, so I said, pretty stoutly:

"'I want, please, sir, to find the ships. I want to be a sailor.'

"'Bless my stars! Why, yer nawthin' but a baby!'

"'I ain't, either! I'm fourteen years old.'

"'What does your ma say to it?'

"I sulked.

"'Run away, hey? Thought so. Well, the bes' thing you kin do, youngster, is to toddle straight home agin.'

"My heart swelled, but I proudly choked back my tears.

"'It's too far. Besides, I'm going to be a sailor, if the stars fall!' For I was a self-willed lad. And he sighed.

"The sailor shifted his quid again, and his eyes twinkled as he said:

"'Wall, 'course we all want the stars to stay aloft. It 'ud be a bad lookout for sailors ef they fell. B'lieve, too, the master-at-arms *does* want a extry powder-monkey. Come along!'

"And he went yawing and tacking down the street, I paddling after as fast as I could go. We got to the docks, where he hailed a small boat, and pulled out into the stream.

"'Couldn't I wash some place, and get into some clean clothes, sir, before I go on the ship?' I asked, anxiously.

"'Right!' he growled, in a deep, bass voice, and nodded his head approvingly. 'Hop overboard here and I'll make shift somehow to rig you when you come aboard.'

"I was a little startled at the thought of plunging into the great river, with its freight of steamers, rafts, and crafts of all sizes; but I wasn't going to show it, and I took a header off the bow. After I had swam about for five minutes or so, he sang out for me to come aboard, and hauled me over the side, dripping. Then he opened my little bundle, and helped me into dry, clean clothes. The others were too ragged to keep, so we left them in the boat; and I was very glad to be clean and whole, I can tell you, when I stepped over the side of the big ship, and saw her white decks and shining brass-work.

"An officer was walking up and down. My old friend raised his hand to his fore-

head, palm out ; the officer touched his glittering cap.

"'Brought this here boy aboard, sir. Wants to enlist, and master-at-arms wants a'other powder-monkey in place o' Reynolds.

"'Very well,' said the officer. Then, looking sharply at me, he continued: 'I hope he's not tarred with the same brush?'

"'I think not, sir. He seems honest, and knows how to obey.'

"What a pang that gave me! 'Knows how to obey!' I hung my head for shame ; though the officer thought it was shyness, and said kindly : 'Go below and get rigged.'

"Next day I began to learn my duties ; and the first lesson I had was that *everybody* had a right to order me about. Hardy, the old gunner who picked me up, had given me one piece of advice, which he said would cover everything. It was : 'Obey whatever order is given you. It's better to make forty mistakes by *minding*, than one by disobeying.' So I sprang about actively, doing my best; got into no serious scrapes,

and felt it was a grand thing to be in the Navy.

"The winter passed quietly enough, but the last of February orders came for a draft of men to be sent to the U. S. S. *Cumberland.* Hardy managed it so that I went with him ; and for the first few hours after we sailed for Fort Monroe I dreamed wild dreams of fame. But a brisk gale blew up, there was a nasty sea on, and I soon lay groaning in the agonies of sea-sickness. I thought I was going to die, and how I wished for home and mother !

"There were two or three boys forward as sick as I, but the others were full of tricks that seemed impish. A favorite one was to dangle a bit of fat pork by a string before our eyes, and to couple it with suggestions that made us writhe with nausea. Then, too, we had to be about on duty.

"I declare," said Father Jerome, "I feel sorry for myself even now when I think of that sickening journey ! But it wore itself out, as everything will ; and by the time we

entered the Capes * I was able to skip about with the spryest.

"It was a pretty sight to see the ships riding at anchor in the Roads ; and, although it was only March, the shores were green, and the air was sweet with spring. But the batteries bristled about us, and the first news that met us was of the great ram *Merrimac* that was coming from Norfolk to destroy the squadron. That gallant old sea-dog Buchanan commanded her ; Tredgar and Catesby Jones were among her officers ; she was reported of enormous size, and was said to be invulnerable.

"But the days drifted quietly by, and we youngsters almost forgot to expect her. Then came one or two false alarms, and finally on the 8th of March we saw the smoke trailing far up the Elizabeth River. On the point opposite the Fort, carriage after carriage appeared, filled with ladies in gay colors ; and crowds of men clustered on the bridge and

* Capes Charles and Henry.

shore, until there was hardly foot-room.

"Captain Radford was absent from the ship, and so Lieutenant Morris * was in command. He was walking up and down, lightly humming a little tune, and giving his orders quietly. The big guns were rolled out, and the shot piled near at hand. Then a great bag of sand was sifted about.

"'What's that for, Mr. Hardy?' I whispered to my old friend, whose station was at one of the heavy pivot-guns on the spar-deck.

"'To soak up the blood, lad,' he answered, quite simply.

"'Blood!'

"'Yes,' he grinned; 'yer ain't sech a lubber as to think there'll be a fight 'thout blood, air you?'

"'I hadn't thought of that,' I said; then I plucked up courage to add: 'Mr. Hardy, if I get dazed and stupid with the noise' (for I had heard the Long Toms roar), 'just sort of give me a shove or a word; for I don't want to

* A son of Commodore Morris, U. S. N.

look like a coward.' (I was awfully scared.)

"'Aye, aye, lad!' he growled, staring absently at the smoke drawing nearer and nearer; 'and ef I git my discharge-papers in the fight, I wisht yer'd make a shift ter git my chist home to my old woman. She lives in New York, out by Squattertown. I've give my money to the Cap'n, but I didn't like to bother him about the chist.'

"Just as I was going to answer, the signal was given, and we all jumped to our stations, and silence fell on the ship. It was a beautiful day, with a strong wind blowing off-shore; and the Horseshoe was white with foam. By this time the Ram was in sight. She looked for all the world like a little ship-house, sunk half way, and painted black; and as she puffed along in a slow, sullen way, with the sharp iron peak turning the water into furrows like a ploughshare, the men looked at each other, and two or three of the old shell-backs shook their heads, and said: ''Tain't nateral! Who ever heern of fightin' a iron ship wi'

wood?' But the younger ones laughed, and some of them patted their guns and boasted of what they'd do.

"The ram's crew thought they were going to surprise us, we looked so peaceful. The week's wash was hanging on the rigging, and the booms were out alongside, with the boats tied to them ; but when they were about three quarters of a mile away, Lieut. Morris twigged his eye aloft, and waved his hand. Down came the wash, the booms were swung alongside, the boats were sent astern, and the ship swung into position. The ram drove in between us and the *Congress.* Then there was a stunning roar, and a crash as if the world were at an end, and we seemed wrapped in fire.

"Great God, what sights were there! Arms and legs flying by ; shattered trunks quivering on the deck ; blood and palpitating bits of flesh scattered over the guns, the men—everywhere ; and at my very feet rolled the head of a young sailor belonging to the crew of one of the after-guns, his

mouth still open with the cheer he was giving, his features distorted with agony, his eye-lids snapping violently. I turned deadly sick ; but Hardy dashed a bucket of water over me, and sent me below for fresh powder.

"When I came on deck, the *Merrimac* was still advancing, but the dead were being laid aside, and the wounded carried to the berth-deck and sick-bay. Captain Morris's eyes were flashing and his nostrils quivering, but his voice was clear and steady, and except for a quick look of sorrow at his poor mangled men he was as gay and bright as ever.

"Of course I kept my eyes fixed on the *Merrimac*. She was coming full tilt at us, her bow at right angles with our hull, and she struck us a little forward of amidships. The splintering, tearing sound of the wood, the sharp shriek of the dying below, and the hollow, wrathful groan that broke from many of the living, made this as awful an event as the first broadside. And with it ringing over the water came the summons to surrender.

"'Never!' shouted Morris. 'I'll sink alongside!' *

"And he had the flag nailed to the mast-head, and gave his orders as cheerfully and calmly as if there was not a hole in the ship's side 'big enough to drive a cart and horse into.'†

"Such of the wounded as could be got on deck were helped to the boats; and as the ship settled, the men came pouring up from the gun-deck; but not until they had been knee-deep in water as they worked the guns.

"The firing went on from the *Merrimac*, and our pivot-guns on the spar-deck answered back. Down in the sick-bay all sound had ceased, ‡ and the water began lapping over our feet; then the ship gave a sickening lurch, and went down.

"The last thing I remember was seeing the fire spurt from the guns when the water was only a few inches from their muzzles, and seeing the flag fly so clear and beau-

* His own words.
† The words used by an eye-witness of the fight.
‡ Over 100 men were lost by death and drowning.

tiful against the sky. Then the waves closed over me; somebody seized me violently by the hair, and I didn't know anything else till I came to on the strip of sand that did duty for a beach.

"I thought I was dead; I sat up and rubbed my eyes vigorously, choking the salt-water out of my throat, and coughing like a steam tug. The ship was gone, but from her main topmast floated the pennon. The *Congress* was there, but the white flag flew at her main, and she was hard aground and afire; the *Minnesota* was aground too; and the *Merrimac* was steaming back toward Norfolk, while the people on the point cheered like mad.

"At my side lay Hardy, pale and still; and I noticed the blood was clotted on his forehead, and a piece of flesh as big as your fist was dug out of his side. He was stripped to the waist, and I saw round his neck a stout string, on which hung a square of dark cloth, with a medal sewed on it. While I looked, he lifted his hand and

caught the two things and raised them to his lips.

"'O Mr. Hardy!' I said, 'are you going to die?'

"'Not yet, my boy, thank God! D'ye see them?' and he held up the bit of flannel and the medal. 'Nobody dies an unpervided death that wears them with the right sperrit and belief.'

"'What are they?' I asked, curiously.

"'Why, bless my eyes, boy, don't you know? That's the Scapular of Mt. Carmel, and that's a medal of the Blessed Virgin. Ain't you ever heerd of the patron saint of sailors—Mary, the Star of the Sea?'

"He had sat up in his eagerness, but turned to look at the ship as he spoke. His eyes searched the water anxiously, and lighted up for a moment when he spied the pennon; but when he sighted the *Congress* he fell back on the sand, muttering:

"'Poor old girl!' (meaning the *Cumberland*), 'she's gone to her death, sartin; but it

was wi' colors flyin', and things ship-shape. Now, thar's the *Congress!* Lord! Lord!' and the tears trickled down his grizzled beard. 'Cap'n Joe* must be dead, shore; fur he wouldn't 'a let that white rag float.' (We found afterward he was dead.) Then he continued, wearily: 'We mustn't lay here all night, my boy: we must git off to the Fort.'

"And he signalled a small boat that was pottering about, picking up the wounded and bits of wreckage; and we were landed at the Fort, where Hardy's wounds were dressed, and where we heard to our delight that Lieut. Morris was alive. And the next day we saw the great fight between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*,—the fight that avenged the *Cumberland*, and revolutionized naval warfare throughout the world."

"Ah," said Bob, with a long breath, "*that* was worth living for! But to have to stick

* Captain Joseph Smith, the son of Admiral Joseph Smith, U. S. N., and a brother of Miss Anna Smith, of Washington, who devotes her life and fortune to charity. Her last public work was presenting her house and grounds on 9th Street, N. W., for a house of the Good Shepherd, the only institution of the kind in the city.

in a poky—" He checked himself, and gave a quick, impatient sigh. "Tell me about the *Monitor*, please, Father."

"Not to-day, my boy," said the good priest, kindly; "for I have to be back at Shrewsbury by noon. And now, before I go, I have a favor to ask of you."

"Anything, Father!" said Bob, enthusiastically.

"You are fond of the sea, and want to be a sailor? Am I right?"

"Well, I should smi—I mean I should rather think so."

"Well, I want you to promise me you will never go to sea without your mother's consent."

Bob hesitated, then looked up frankly into Father Jerome's face. "That would be an awful hard promise to keep, Father."

"You could do it, though, if you promised. And, my lad," said he, laying his hand on Bob's shoulder, "it will save you a sore heart for the rest of your life. When I got my first promotion, and wrote home to my

dear old mother, my letter came back with the words, '*Dead, and the family moved away,*' written across it. And I have never seen one of them since, although I've hunted and advertised far and wide."

"Yes, Father," said Bob, subdued by his sadness.

"Have I your promise?"

"Ye—e—s," said Bob; "but, oh, do pray that mother will let me go! It's all I care for, or think about. How could you leave it, Father Jerome? Oh, my—I beg your pardon!"

"Not at all, lad; no harm done. Good old Hardy made a Catholic of me before he was killed at Port Hudson; and when the war was over I went out to the Mediterranean. I was in Rome one Easter Week, and that set me thinking. I had seen an awful lot of men killed in the body, and many an honest sailor ruining his soul: and I wondered if, being a sailor myself, I couldn't understand and help them a bit. So, when we got into Norfolk, and I was

discharged, I went up to Baltimore to see the Archbishop, and to ask if he thought a rough sailor like me could do anything; and here I am!"

Then he left us, Bob hanging about him to the last, and being made happy by an invitation to visit him before he left Father McDonald's.

II.

For a day or two after Father Jerome's visit, Bob went about in a state of abstraction that made him both exasperating and amusing. He stumbled over chairs, and bumped into doors; he tripped over my train on an average of three times an evening; he upset cups and vases, knocked the music from the piano rack when he tried to turn it, and finally mooned to such an extent that on Tuesday afternoon I said:

"For mercy's sake, boy, go out-doors, and tumble about there!"

"All right," he said, laughing. "I'm an awful duffer, I know; but forgive it this time."

The next I saw of him he was walking up and down on the piazza, his hat on the back of his head, his hands stuffed into his pockets, buried in thought, and whistling like a fife. Of course it was "Nancy Lee," with "The Tar's Farewell" and "The Mid-

shipmite" for a change. In the midst of a fine flourish he straightened himself up and started for the stables, where I heard his clear, boyish voice, a few minutes later, ordering Tony to saddle Black Jess. Then he came running up-stairs. He stopped at my door.

"Aunt Nell, I'm going to see Father Jerome. You know he promised to tell me about the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac;* and, besides, I want to talk to him." Then, abruptly: "What's a vocation, anyway?"

"A calling to any special state of life, dear. Don't you know—a vocation to the priesthood, and so on?"

"How many sorts are there?"

"Why, almost as many as there are walks of life."

"Oh!"

Then he went on.

"Well, now, if a person's got a vocation, he ought to follow it, oughtn't he?"

"Yes,—that is if he's sure of it, and—"

"Oh! I'm sure of it fast enough—dead sure—and I think it's a first-rate one—"

"And present, temporary duties do not interfere," I continued, quietly.

"Oh, bother!—no, I didn't mean that! But there's just this to it: I don't mean to whine around, or kick over the traces—"

"O Bob!" I remonstrated.

"Well, I ain't going to give you all any more worry than I can help; but I do earnestly believe my vocation is salt-water, and I can *not* settle my mind to being cooped up on shore all my life."

And there came into his bright eyes a look that made me think of a young eagle I saw once, caged and petted, but—not tamed.

"I'm going to make a novena," he added, a little defiantly; "and I'm going to take St. Paul for a patron. He did enough sailing round to sympathize with a fellow."

"Bob!"

"No: I don't mean any irreverence. But I've tied myself up with a promise, and all that's left for me to do is just to *pray* myself into a sailor."

I turned away to hide a smile, which I would not have had him see for anything; not at his faith—that was natural—but at his boyish and somewhat belligerent expression of it; and as I stood, I busied myself at my desk a moment.

"I think while you are dressing I will write a line to Father Jerome, asking him to tea to-morrow evening. Father McDonald will be away, and it will be lonesome for him."

"Do," said Bob, "that's a real good fellow!" (In his exuberance he sometimes ranked me as a "fellow," and a "hearty"; and once, when between us we upset a glue-pot, he called me his "messmate," with an appreciation of his small pun that made me laugh in spite of myself.)

And he rattled off to "A Life on the Ocean Wave" some fifteen minutes later, leaving me more gravely impressed with his earnestness regarding a sailor-life than I had ever been.

III.

TOWARD dusk Bob rode up, and flung himself off Black Jess, tired, and apparently disgusted.

"Father Jerome was out," he said. "I waited an hour, hoping he'd get back, but he didn't; and all I could do was to leave the note and come away. Pshaw! I hate to miss people when I want to see them!"

This was so manifest that I hastened to consult him as to what we should have for tea the next evening. But his usually sweet temper was still a trifle ruffled, and he half grumbled: "Sailors don't care what they eat. If you were to live on 'salt horse' and hard-tack, with plum-duff and lobscouse for rarities, you'd be—"

"Quite willing to eat anything nice I could get hold of. Why, my dear, those names are enough to scare a body's appetite away! 'Salt horse,' 'hard-tack'; *they* are

bad enough, but the others are quite impossible. I suppose," I added mildly, "you will be inviting me to eat binnacles and scuppers next?" (*I* was *not* nautical.) This made him laugh, and the little cloud dispersed.

The next morning brought a note from Father Jerome, thanking us for our invitation, but saying he could not accept it, as an old shipmate had met him at the depot the evening before, and was spending the day with him, by Father McDonald's permission. He added, however: "If you will allow me, I will come after tea, and bring him with me. He is Commander Gorringe, U. S. N.,*—a fine fellow, and one who, I think, will prove an interesting acquaintance to you all, especially to my friend Bob."

The boy's face was a study when he gave me back the note, which I had handed him.

* Commander Henry Honeychurch Gorringe resigned from the U. S. Navy in '83–84, and became prominently connected with the Cramp Ship-yards. He received an injury in a fall from a train, which, after an agonizing illness, bravely borne, caused his death a few weeks ago, (July, 1885) in New York. He was a gallant officer, a devoted son, and a faithful friend.

"Why, that's the fellow that brought over the obelisk,*—don't you know? Don't you remember the row there in Egypt when he wrapped the American flag around it, and dared 'em to come on?"

"Why, so it is, Bob; and you'll have some more of your beloved 'yarns.'"

He fairly danced.

"Is that a Highland Fling?" I rashly asked.

"Highland Fling!" said Bob, scornfully. Then he added: "Not to know a hornpipe when you see it! Well, ma'am, all I can say to you is you had just better cultivate Cooper's acquaintance, or Marryatt's, or—"

"O Bob," I hurried to interrupt, "I am reading the 'Water-Witch' now as fast as I can; but I do get so tangled up in the ropes and things,—don't you know?"

"You may bet your—I mean, I think you do, slightly. "Let me see," he added, reflectively. "Who was it asked me if the keel was what they used to heave the log with?"

* In Central Park, New York.

"Well," I said, in self defense, "reel and keel do sound alike."

"Aunt Nell," he said, with a twinkle that ought to have warned me, "if I should ask you if your backbone was what you tied your collar with, what would you think?"

"That you were a goose, dear, as usual."

"Then, as the keel is the ship's backbone, and the reel the little whirligig the log-line is wound on, the deduction is that you are a ——, eh?"

And then he clattered up-stairs, where he refreshed himself by rubbing up every pike and cutlass and pistol in his collection.

IV.

EVENING brought a harvest moon, Father Jerome, and his friend. We were sitting on the piazza when they drove up, and Bob and I went forward to welcome them. The sailor priest shook hands heartily, and then introduced his friend.

He was a man above middle height, of robust build, and slightly lame. He raised his hat and bowed to me, then turned to Bob, and, as he caught the boy's hand in a cordial grasp, he said :

"So this is the young man that wants to be a sailor, eh? A hard life, lad ; a hard life !"

"Most things worth having are hard, sir, —I mean, to get and do," answered Bob, modestly but firmly.

"That's true," said he, looking more attentively at the boy. "And if you stick to that idea you'll do."

Then we went on the piazza, and when the conversation became general, Father Jerome drew aside a little and said to me :

"Gorringe is such a modest fellow he will never talk about himself, but I'm going to try to get him to tell Bob about his first cruise. It is enough to knock the 'romance of the sea' into a cocked hat."

We were both watching the young officer while he was speaking. His small, well-set head was covered with close-cropped brown hair, into which, from the forehead, ran a deep scar. His features were clean-cut, his eye-brows level and well defined, and a smile of exceeding sweetness played over his thin lips. His manner was as simple as Father Jerome's, but more polished, and his words were to the point and ready.

Presently Father Jerome laughed amusedly :

"I shall never forget the first time I saw him. It was on the Mississippi, during one of the hottest fights we had under Porter. He had come aboard during the night, with

a new draft of men, but I was too excited the next morning to notice anything except the preparations for the battle. Hardy was serving a heavy gun on the spar-deck, but I was on duty 'tween decks. Broadsides were thundering, and the whole place was a smother of powder-smoke. Our gun's crew were doing their level best to cripple the enemy ; but just as we got well alongside, a shell burst among us that didn't leave five men standing. Even I was tumbled into a corner, and I watched three crews come up and scatter under either shells or the fire of small-arms. Then the gun-captain (a young lieutenant, whose name I have forgotten, and whose arm, by the way, was torn off at the elbow) ordered the men to let that gun alone, and they drew off, not too willingly ; for in the last effort to work it they had loaded it and run it out the port.

"About five minutes afterward I saw a young sailor come stepping along. He wasn't more than eighteen or so, with the roundest, most boyish face I ever saw. He

was in his bare feet, and the sleeves of his blue shirt were rolled up to the shoulders; and I noticed how fine and white his skin was, and I wondered what he was doing in such a mess. He looked all around, then went up to the gun, examined it, and glanced out the port-hole. Something he saw seemed to excite him highly, for he struck his open hand on the breach of the gun, and said: 'I'll do it; by George, I will!' and he hauled away at the lanyard, and another deafening voice was added to the uproar.

"Then he caught up the swab and sponge, and got astride the gun, worked his way out on it, and laid along it, swabbing—and whistling I suppose; for his mouth was puckered up, but the lull was over, and I couldn't hear any more than if I were stone-deaf. Then he wriggled and slid back, and looked around for powder.

"I remembered putting a lot of bags alongside the bulwark before the first explosion, and I lifted my head as well as I could.

Two of the second crew had fallen on the powder, and hid it from sight. I called out: 'Hi there, you!' But of course he didn't hear, so I picked up a rammer, and flung it at him.

"Then he turned, and I pointed. He lifted up the dead men as well as he could, and hauled out three or four bags. And as he did it he looked over and nodded at me with a smile of real delight. Then he picked up the rammer, crawled out on the gun again, and put in the charge; after which he came back for the shot, put that in, and rammed the whole well home; then he came inboard, and fired it a second time. And he kept at that till the fight was over, when he helped to carry me below.

"After the doctor had patched me up, Hardy came to see how I was getting on, and to scold me for what he called 'yer impidence in pretendin' you were man enough to git wounded. Why, boy,' said he, 'ye'd better look out! Thar ain't enough of you for a good, respectable wound to

spread out on. It 'ud lap over, and leave you short two or three legs and arms.'

"But he grunted with such satisfaction when he heard it was only my ribs that were broken, and my scalp that was cracked, that I knew he was really concerned.

"I told him about the sailor I had seen. His eyes twinkled.

"'He's a cool 'un, he is, and no mistake! I was helpin' cut away the raffle, when the cap'n asks: Who fought that ere gun?

"'I don't know, sir,' says th' executive.

"'Find out, if you please, sir,' says the cap'n.

"'Aye, aye, sir,' says th' executive. And he slews round to the men washin' down the deck. 'Do any of you know?' he sings out.

"'Plaze, sir, says Pat Dolan (a foretop man) I don't jist remimber his name, but he's wan av thim new min that came aboord last night, sir.'

"Then up speaks Dover Bill: 'Hi think, sir, 'is name's Horange.'

"'Send him for'ard,' says the executive.

"'Aye, aye, sir.'

"An' he come along, looking the surprisedest. He was grimy, and his clothes were torn fore and aft; and he looked fust at one and then at another. The cap'n fixed his eye on him, and said, deep and stern: 'Did you work that gun the last half of the engagement?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Who gave you your orders?'

"'No one, sir.'

"'Then why did you do it?'

"'Well, sir, as I was looking through the porthole, I got such a good sight at the enemy I thought it was a pity for the gun to be idle, and I—well, sir, then I just let fly.'

"'And you did very right. [The boy looked surprised.] I am pleased with you, and intend to mention you in the dispatches.'

"'The blood went a hummin' up inter his face, till it looked like a wig-wag,* but th' old man went on:

* A signal flag.

"'Will you have promotion, or would you rather have a medal?

"'He raised his head, and said, simply: 'A medal, if you please, sir.'

"'Rather than promotion? That's unusual. May I ask why? [The old cap'n was a gentleman to the core.]

"'I have a mother, sir,' says he, gently as a girl. 'A promotion's a empty name, but a medal I could send to her.'*

"'Very well,' says the cap'n, and turns away; 'but,' concluded Hardy, 'I heerd him say to th' executive: 'That fellow's a gentleman's son, I'll bet my hat; and he'll make his mark.'

"And he did," said Father Jerome, heartily. "Before three months he was Acting Ensign; and he went on steadily advancing in honor till the war was over; then he passed first or second on a tremendously long list, and was commissioned in the Regular Navy as a Lieu-

* The incident is strictly true, and the conversation as nearly *verbatim* as my memory will permit.

tenant-Commander— But Bob must have his story before it grows too late."

And in the first pause he said:

"Well, Harry, have you convinced Bob that a sea life is not all his fancy painted?"

(The boy had been sitting at the Captain's feet, watching him with the most rapt attention.)

"No," answered the pleasant voice, "I haven't said anything about it."

"Why, how's that?"

"Well, I didn't think any one would care to hear a sailor talk shop."

"Oh, do, Captain Gorringe!" said Bob, with such a heartfelt sigh that the Captain laughed, and said, kindly:

"What would you like to know, lad?"

"Oh!" said Bob, "what you felt, what you thought, what you did, when you first got fairly afloat. Where you went, what you saw—"

And he stopped, fairly silenced by the vastness of the subject.

"Well, I felt desperately sea-sick, and

thoroughly homesick; and while I was straining my eyes to see the last of the island, a rope's end was laid sharply on my back and about my legs, to make me 'tumble-up lively.'"

"How brutal!" broke in the soft voice of Bob's mother. "What did you do, Captain Gorringe?"

"I went aloft, Madam. But when I got there, I 'laid out' on a yard, the sickest, sorriest youngster you ever saw."

"Are such things allowed in the Navy?"

"I was not in the Navy then. I was in the English merchant marine. My father shipped me—"

"Your *father?* Pardon—"

"Do not get a mistaken impression, Madam. My father was as loth to do it as my mother was to let him do it,—and perhaps you can guess what that feeling was," he added, with a smile. "But I had the mania for a sea-life too strongly to reason, or hear reason. I even went so far as to threaten to run away if he did not

consent; and, as the ships were coming and going daily, and as I was an obstinate little wretch, there was some ground for expecting I'd do it.

"My father was a clergyman of the Church of England, and we lived in the Barbadoes. His parish was the whole island, and, as he spent much of his time riding about among the people, he was often absent from home for days at a time; and these intervals were what he feared.

"I made myself simply odious in the matter, and finally things reached such a pitch that he told me if I would go back to school, study hard, and not say 'sea' for a year, he would let me go, if I did not change my mind.

"I did it, and the day the year was up I walked into his study and reminded him of his promise. He fairly groaned, but said: 'Yes, I will keep my part of the bargain, as you have kept yours.' But he added: 'My son, you must begin at the foot of the ladder. I shall ship you as a cabin-boy,

and you'll have to fare and share alike with the other 'prentices, and they are a rough lot.'

"'Very well, sir,' I said. And in a few days I was afloat.

"When I bade good-bye to my mother, I had a lump in my throat as big as a marble; and by the time I saw my father go over the ship's side, and heard the anchor clanking up, it was as big as an apple, and I was choking like a good fellow, when the bosen gave me the rope's end. That was a diversion!"

"But after that?" asked Bob, a little crestfallen.

"Oh, after that we sailed quietly enough to London, and there the first time I went ashore I got arrested."

"*You!* What for?"

"Well, my uncle saw me trotting round the wharves, and thought, of course, I had run away; so he nabbed me, and had me locked up until he could get a message to my father. But I referred him so per-

sistently to the captain that at last he sent for him, and learned to his great amazement that I was shipped with my father's consent. He was very angry, and called us a pair of fools, I remember."

Captain Gorringe said this so quaintly that we all laughed.

"And then?" said Bob, expectantly.

"Well, after that we did have some adventures."

"Ah—h—h!" said our boy; "tell 'em—that is, please, Captain!"

V.

"Our adventures began off the Guinea coast. We saw a meteor, and the sailors got very low-spirited, for they are superstitious—poor fellows!—to the last degree. They declared it was no use to brace up and have a good time, for they were all bound for 'Davy Jones's Locker'; and we crossed the line (the Equator) without any of the usual ceremonies of receiving Neptune, and initiating the green hands,—although we youngsters tried our best to be jolly."

"Captain," I interrupted, "excuse me please, but what is 'Davy Jones's Locker'?"

"Well," said he, "as nearly as I can reckon it is the bottom of the sea; but why *Davy Jones's* I have not been able to make out, nor have I ever heard."

"Coast of Guinea—" said Bob.

"Yes. And two or three sharks followed the ship for several days; and whenever we

looked over the side, and saw those sharp black fins cutting the water, we all felt blue together.

"Off Good Hope we caught it! I have been in a good many gales, but I certainly think that took the lead. The mizzenmast snapped off to a stump; the foremast and mainmast were sprung, and had to be cut away with all the standing rigging; the hatches were battened down; the decks were swept every moment by enormous seas, and we just went wallowing and staggering along, expecting every minute to be our last. And the wind!—it was like a solid wall, and shrieked and howled as if the princes of the powers of the air were out on a holiday with all their demon crew. But the gale blew itself out at last, and after we got over our surprise at being alive, we rigged a jury-mast and made for Ceylon; and, although we were so forlorn and crippled, we were as jolly as sand-boys, for the sailors thought our 'bad luck' was over.

"Of course we had been blown a long way

out of our course, and whether the charts were wrong or the reckonings faulty I could not say, but I know as we crawled up the coast one beautiful moonlight night we ran full on a sunken reef, and the ship foundered so rapidly that we had only time to save ourselves.

"We landed on a barren ledge of the main land; and the captain, after muttering a few words about 'Disgrace of losing my ship—loss of the owners—being broken from my rank,' put his revolver to his temple and blew his brains out. He fell on the edge of the rocks, where he lay a moment, then rolled into the water."

"How horrible!" I shudderingly said.

"Yes, it was," he replied, thoughtfully; "especially as it was the first suicide I had ever witnessed. But, do you know, my strongest sensation, after the first shock, was disgust for the cowardice of the thing!"

"That is just what it amounts to," said Father Jerome,—"unless the mind is hopelessly deranged; for the suicide shifts

his burdens to the shoulders of the survivors, disgraces his family, tarnishes their name, and deepens their troubles. Worst of all, he loses his immortal soul by dying in the act of predetermined murder; for 'Thou shalt not kill' binds us to refrain from taking our own lives as well as from taking the life of another. Despair is the devil's favorite temptation—but avast there! I'm preaching you a little sermon. Go on, Gorringe, with your story."

"There isn't much more to tell. We started up country, hoping to fall in with some friendly natives. But how we suffered! We tramped through the day at first, but the scorching sun killed two of the party; then we went by night, but that was ugly work; for the jungle was alive with poisonous things, and full of cobras and boas, and we were always on the lookout for tigers. At last one came. It was in the morning, about eleven o'clock. We were moving along slowly, for there was only eight of us left, and we were so weak we could hardly crawl."

"Where were the others, Captain?" asked Bob.

"Dead. We had only roots and grasses to eat, and some were poisoned; and the grass brought on diseases that killed those who ate it."

"And the tiger?"

"Yes, and a great fellow he was, too. He bounced out of the jungle, and stood staring at us, swinging his tail from side to side, and watching us with his great eyes glaring. I declare he looked so much like a cat that I felt just like a mouse! I happened to be a little ahead of the others; back of me was an old sailor—the carpenter—and the rest were walking Indian-file. Hodgson had a staff, and that was the only thing in the way of a weapon in the party. We halted, and some began to drop back, but I was too scared to move.

"'Stop!' sang out the old fellow; 'stop! Your on'y chawnce is in keepin' perfectly still, and starin' 'im hout o' countenance.'

"We kept our eyes steadily fixed on the

brute, and I felt my flesh crawl and crinkle all over as I wondered whether I was the one he'd choose to spring at; but either he had had a good breakfast, or thought our bones were not worth picking, for after some minutes he turned tail, and trotted into the jungle.

"Soon afterward we fell in with a party of friendly Indians—Christians—who took us to their mission; and the missionary gave us clothes and food, and started me homeward on an American fruit vessel, that had come out with a load of oranges from Havana, and was going back with nutmegs, etc., to St. Thomas.

"My lad," he added, turning impressively to Bob, "never go into the merchant service. There is no set authority; the owners let the captains do pretty much as they please, so long as they fetch and carry the cargoes all right; and a bad captain or mate can make a ship unbearable, for he is absolute master for the time being of his men's bodies—I had almost said souls. The ships

are often unseaworthy, generally overloaded, and are recklessly exposed."

"But, Captain," burst out poor Bob, "what am I to do? I'm wild to go to sea, but I've promised Father Jerome I won't run off; mother won't let me go to China, to fight the pirates; there's no war to enlist for; and now you say the merchant service is not to be thought of—"

"Not unless you want 'more kicks than ha'pence,'" he quoted, softly, under his breath.

"What shall I do, then?" said the excited boy.

"Why, I'll tell you. Madam,"—turning to Bob's mother,—"will you be willing to trust your boy to Father Jerome and me for a week? We are going to Washington to-morrow. I have some business there, with the Secretary; and I think I can put your son in the way of gratifying his tastes without greatly distressing you; I may even cure him of his sea-madness."

"I could trust him anywhere with either

of you," she said; "but the care, the trouble—"

"There will be neither, I assure you," he answered, in his kindest manner.

And then and there it was settled that he should go.

"Do you feel your epaulets sprouting?" I whispered, as Bob said good-night; for I felt in my heart he had taken the first step toward fulfilling his vocation.

VI.

His letters began coming three days after he left, and were regular and voluminous. The first was exultant:

"Just think! almost the first person I saw was Admiral Worden,—the fellow that commanded the *Monitor*, you know! [Here came a string of exclamation points like inflated balloons.] The Captain and I were on our way to the Department [Navy, of course, understood]. We had turned into Pennsylvania Avenue at 15th Street and New York Avenue, and I was trying to look both ways at once; for the Treasury was on one side, also the White House; and on the other was Lafayette Square, and up a side street [Vermont Avenue] was the house where Mr. Seward was assassinated. First I'd take a snatch at the White House (mighty ugly too, outside), then I'd slew round, and squint up the street at the Seward house; then I'd poke into the Square to see the big statue of Jackson. That's fine! The horse is a whopper. He's rearing up in the air like a good fellow; and the thin little General is saluting the White House as politely as you

please. The Captain says his hind legs are cast solid, and his head and neck and fore legs hollow (the horse I mean); and a man named Mills made him (not that nice little Theodore Mills,* but his father). And the General used to salute Thomas Jefferson, too; but the weather preyed upon Thomas Jefferson's bronze, and they took him away from before the White House, and put him up in the Capitol.

"Well, we were tacking along, and suddenly the Captain said: 'Ah, Admiral! glad to see you, sir!' And there was a tall gentleman holding out his hand and saying something, I don't remember what, for just then the Captain turned to me and said: 'Allow me, Admiral, to introduce a warm admirer of yours. Admiral Worden, Bob.' I just gasped, and stared so my eyes must have stuck out like a crab's.

"'A brother of yours, Gorringe?'

"'No: a young friend, who is deeply interested in the Navy.'

"'Indeed! Well, it's a fine service, my boy. Are you going to enter it?'

"'Yes, sir. I don't know just how, but I'm going to do it some way.'

"'By fair means or foul, eh?'

"'No, sir: I've got to do everything above

* The first American sculptor who ever won the medal at Munich.

board; and I reckon it's just as well, for I'm afraid I'd bolt to-morrow if I wasn't strapped up by all sorts of promises.'

"He sort of smiled at this, and said: 'I must see more of your young friend, Gorringe. Fetch him around with you when you are through with the Secretary'; and off he went.

"He's awfully white and pale. His beard's gray, and his hair and even his eyes are gray. The left one is blind, and all around it the gunpowder is blown into the skin so that it looks blue; and he's quiet—not a bit of bounce or brag to him. He's straight and thin, and he's as square about the shoulders as a block. After he went, the Captain told me about his eye.

"You know in those monitors the turrets are revolving, and the only openings are one port for the gun, and a sight-hole. That's a narrow slit in the iron plates, with a round opening about big enough to hold a pea, and the officer puts his eye to that to get a 'sight' of the enemy, so he can train the gun, and have the shots tell. Well, Admiral Worden—he was a lieutenant or something then—was looking through this when a ball came flying spang right on it! The powder was burning, and the hot air and the gas went pelting smack into his eye, and shrivelled the sight out of it, and burnt his face, and banged him up so everybody thought he was killed.

The blood poured, and he was carried down below, and Lieut. Greene finished the fight.

"I am going to-morrow to see the *Wyandotte* at the Navy Yard. It was in a fight, and is chock-full of balls and things. Wish I could see the *Monitor!* But she sank long ago, off Hatteras, in a gale.

"I saw the house where Decatur lived, and am going to see Admiral Porter too.

"Your devoted son,

"BOB.

"P. S.—The journey was safe, and that chicken first-rate."

VII.

Bob's next letter was as follows:

"I had a mighty good time at the Navy Department. We were in Admiral Worden's room an hour, and he talked a lot, and let me ask all the questions I wanted to. But he talked most about what other people did. I just had to fish-hook what I wanted to know about himself, and then played it like a trout to catch it.

"I asked if he wasn't proud of it. He said he was very glad, and deeply thankful. That it was a terrible thing to come into Hampton Roads and find the *Cumberland* sunk, the *Congress* afire, —to see her explode later, and know the *Minnesota* was hard aground, and the destructive iron-clad coming down next day to finish up the fleet. Then, of course, it was touch and go. All of them were anxious, and they hadn't had any sleep; for there was a smartish wind coming around from New York, and the water poured down the hatches by bucketfuls. The revolving machinery was hitchy, and the experiment of floating and fighting such a craft was entirely new. *He* believed in it, for he took Admiral

Smith's view of it (the Captain of the *Congress's* father, you know*). But still it was shaky work. They got alongside of the *Minnesota*, and when the flood-tide came she floated; out came the *Merrimac*, and down poured the people in crowds to watch the fight. The *Merrimac* boomed along, but whichever way she turned there was the *Monitor*—just like a sword-fish and a shark, he said. But it was queer to watch the balls hop off the iron-clad like popcorn (he didn't say *that*), and to hear the strange and awful racket when the balls hit the iron-turret, and when the gun went off in the close space. He says it was the greatest naval fight since Sala—something, and Lepanto; for it changed the entire system of sea fighting, and drove out forever the old wooden sides."

Later the same day was added the following:

"I've been to the Navy Yard. It certainly *is* a place! They make the biggest anchors in the country—one man said in the world, but I'll draw it mild.

"I went on the *Wyandotte*. Great Scott, what a time those fellows must have had! I counted

* Admiral Smith's advice and enthusiasm decided Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward to give Ericsson's strange craft a trial, and the Admiral indicated Worden as an officer worthy to be trusted in the emergency.

four shot buried in the turret,–some cones and some round; and there's a dent as big as a wash-basin in the forward wall, where a ball hit. But inside's the worst. Dozens of rivet heads are off, and the fellow that showed me round said they burst off with the shock of the shot hitting, and that they killed and wounded more men than anything from the outside. The walls are thick as a brick-house walls, but he said they would be only paper and child's play to the guns and things *now*. *They'd* pierce anything made, and that they weren't going to thicken up the armor any more, but make it thinner and of steel, so the balls, etc., could go through without sticking or bursting.

"And he told me a lot about monitors. There was an awful story of one—the *Weehawken*. She was South some place, and a torpedo exploded under her bow, and she just reared up so she lost her balance, and sank with all hands. And two or three years after—when the war was over—the divers went into her, and they found the people just as they were when she swamped. One officer was stooping down in the engine-room, his hand on the machinery, and his head turned toward another, who was stepping out of the room, looking back, with a light in his hand. The men were at their stations, except one, who was jammed in the turret half out the

port. They sank as suddenly as a solid shot, and only one or two were saved. *They* were in the turret, and got out of the port as it turned by.

"And he told about a doctor that lived on Capitol Hill. He was in the first *Monitor* when she foundered; and a boat-load of them were getting off safe, when a wave dashed them up right toward the iron edge of the deck. They'd have been smashed like an egg-shell (for it would have been the same as hitting a rock); but this man—the doctor—quick as lightning put his arm right between the boat and the iron, and caught the shock. It jerked his arm out of the socket, and ground it to a jelly, so the bones had to be all taken out, and it was just a mashed string of flesh and muscles, and it was paralyzed. But he saved the boat and the people.

"I'm going to Annapolis to morrow.

"Your devoted BOB.

"P. S.—I'm well, and having the daisiest kind of a time, and don't you forget—I mean, I certainly am.

"P. S. (No. 2)—Yes'm, I clean my teeth twice a day, and I put on a clean collar and cuffs morning and evening, and I try not to be a bother.

"I'll be home day after to-morrow."

And "day after to-morrow" he did come,

accompanied, to our surprise and pleasure, by Father Jerome. The boy was in splendid trim, and treated the priest with a frank affection and respect that pleased us, and argued well for their friendship.

After he had effervesced for a while, Father Jerome said:

"Bob, I wish you'd leave us for a few minutes: I want to speak to your mother and aunt."

He jumped up, and vanished. Then Father Jerome turned to us:

"I shall be leaving this part of the country to-morrow, and God alone knows when I shall ever see it again. But before I go I want to talk about the boy. You asked my advice, and I'll give it freely. I think he has the making of a splendid sailor in him, and I earnestly advise you to think well before you decide against his following his bent. A forced and thwarted inclination is often as fatal to a good and successful manhood as a vicious or a too much indulged one. Now, as to the ways and means.

"There are school-ships, where boys are carefully and humanely, even gently, trained to be good seamen. For instance, Lieut. Robert Berry's ship, the *St. Mary's*, in New York harbor. But the after-lot of these boys is cast entirely in the foke'sel [forecastle], and they never rise to higher grades than gunners, quartermasters, bosens and mates,—unless they have served their time in the U. S. Navy, they quit it and go into the merchant service. My old Commander, Porter, thought this unadvisable, and bade me say that, if you can bring your mind to it, he will do all he can to get Bob an appointment at the Naval Academy. There he will receive a brilliant professional education, will be under strict but reasonable discipline, and will be well developed, physically and mentally. He will be there four years; and if by that time his taste changes, he has only to give a few years' service to the Government, and then resign."

Bob's mother paled visibly, and trembled, while the tears gathered in her eyes.

"O Father, my only son!"

"Yes, madam; I know. But he's a good lad, and dutiful. Couldn't you make a sacrifice for him?"

"Oh, don't ask me now! Must I decide at once?—can't I see you again?"

"Not after to-day."

"But his religion! They say the officers are so wild and dissipated!"

"His religion will not be interfered with, you may depend. I inquired particularly into that. And as to dissipation and bad habits, while there are unfortunately many who, having no sheet-anchors in the way of faith and strong principle, do go adrift, there are others whose examples are 'as lamps to the feet' of those among whom they walk. Look at Admiral Sands,*—'an officer and a gentleman,' if one ever trod a deck! Ah! Madam, those words mean a

* A Catholic officer, who died some months since, in Washington.

good deal, and I think Bob can grow up to their full measure."

"Give me till this evening—only till then!" she begged.

"I must say good-bye now, but I shall hope to hear from you. God bless you and yours!"

And, with a cordial hand-grasp, he was gone from among us.

Bob's mother went to her room and locked herself in—to say her Beads, I knew, and to seek the prayers and counsel of that other Mother, to whom the sorrowful and perplexed can always turn, sure of relief and comfort.

I met Bob at the door. He halted at the sight of my sober face.

"Where's Father Jerome? Gone! Why didn't you— But halloo, Aunt Nell! what's up?"

When I told him, he said: "Is that so? Well I reckon I'll go say some prayers too, for this certainly is the turning-point. I finished my Novena yesterday."

And up he bolted to his room, where I saw him a few minutes later kneeling before a print of Our Lady (which was wedged between his handsomest ship and his most blood-curdling sea-fight—the place of honor in his boyish mind), with a string of "Job's Tears" slipping fast through his fingers; for our boy *would* be nautical even in his prayers, and preferred the little sea-weed bladders to any other kind of rosary.

That night, when his mother gave her consent to his going to the Academy, he was almost as much overcome as she was, and could scarcely be gentle and tender enough with her to show his appreciation. He rode over, full tilt, to see Father Jerome at day-break, and within ten days a notification came to him to appear before the Examining Board at Annapolis in September, to compete for a position as cadet midshipman in the U. S. Navy. The same mail brought a letter from Captain Gorringe, recommending certain studies; and the express brought a lot of books, into which Bob plunged *con amore.*

As the day of departure drew near, the house got damper and damper; for Bob's mother and I cried in secret, in public, and incessantly. Even he forgot to whistle "Nancy Lee," or "Old Timbertoes"; and the only nautical music we had was a quavering appeal to

> "Wrap me up in my tarpaulin jacket,
> And say a poor buffer lies low."

And one bright morning saw us on the platform of the depot, choked with sobs, blinded with tears, and waving two soaked handkerchiefs at our boy as he disappeared on his way to Annapolis.

VIII.

THE next few days were as blank as the eyes of a statue; and, to make matters worse, an easterly gale set in, which filled the air with clouds of mist and flying rain. I quite declined to look at myself in the glass, I was such a tear-stained object; and Bob's mother was my damp fac-simile, besides being too miserable for utterance.

The sunshine and his first letters came together; and as we turned page after page, we decided there *might* be worse things in a family than a sailor, although I must confess we could not at that time imagine what they were. The boy was as happy as youth and hope could make him, and as he found at every turn some object bearing on his heart's dearest wish,— his "vocation,"— everything was rose-colored to his eyes.

He began:

"Here I am at last! And I wish you and Aunt Nell were along too. The town is a queer old place, built like a wheel, with the Court House in the middle; the streets running out like spokes, and a big 'all-around' street like a tire. There's channel enough in the Chesapeake to float heavy ships up to the sea-wall of the Academy. It warmed the cockles of my heart (see Shakespeare or some other fellow) to see the blue jackets and marines, and to watch the sails come and go. There aren't many of the Middies here though, for the ships are out on the practice cruise.

"I *think* I can get in, for Mr. Dugald gave me a little sort of exam., and he said a few weeks' more 'boning' would brace me up to the mark. (That's what they call studying here.) He says I'm weak on 'math' (*that's* mathematics), and he's giving me logarithms, and pons asinorums, and cube roots, and other nice little side-shows, till my hair stands on end like the 'quills of the fretful' (there's another quote for Aunt Nell; she's always telling me to drop slang and use good English); and I go to bed, and have nightmares of assorted sizes.

"There's a fellow here studying and rooming with me. He's a queer lot; comes from the wilds of Michigan. His grandfather was a soldier in the army of the first Napoleon at

Waterloo, and his father got killed in a log-jam the year Robertin (his name's Robert Robertin) was born. His grandfather was kind of childish, and his mother was an Indian woman, whose people were all Catholics from the time of Père Marquette.

"She was awfully cut up about his father's death, and turned gray that night, and never spoke much afterward. And he says the first thing he remembers is crouching down by a big log fire, with the dark, sad woman spinning on one side, and the old white-bearded man on the other, and listening to the fire snap, and the wind and wolves howling outside; and every now and then his grandfather would sing, in a cracked, high voice, soldier songs, or tell stories of Napoleon; for he could remember everything up to the time he was twenty-five, and not any more. Wasn't it queer?

"And sometimes he — the old man — would begin to sing low under his breath the *Ça Ira*, but he'd always shudder and shake, and never finish; for that was the tune *his* father had gone to the guillotine by. *He* was a lord's steward, and hid his master, and tried to save his property; and they executed him for a bad citizen. On the guillotine he got one hand loose, and crossed himself; and the guard struck him in the face so hard for doing it that he broke his jaw.

"And Robertin never had any children to play with, or any toys; and he knows the queerest things about birds and beasts and fishes; and he's pretty smart at his books. The priest up there gave him lessons. Robertin did his horse, and worked in his garden to pay for them, you know; for he's mighty independent, and he ain't a bit ashamed of having done servant's work, either.

"And the priest hoped some day he'd be another priest, but he said he always was thinking of getting into some place wide, where he could breathe good: the woods smothered him; and when he first saw the Big Lake (Superior), he thought that was it; but then he saw it on the map, and it looked so little that he told the Father, and *he* said: 'Yes, yes: it is the sea you want. I too feel so sometimes; for I came from the coast, and I long for the salt and the sound, for the whirling of the clouds, and the play of the birds and the white-caps. But that is in my Brittany, and I—my lot is here!'

"Then there came a fellow that wanted to go to Congress, and he went among the lumbermen to get their votes; and when some of 'em asked what he'd do for them, he said a lot of things—one was that he'd send one of their sons to the Naval Academy; and he saw what a strapping fellow Robertin was, and picked him out. He's

only seventeen, but is six feet high, and broader than Father Jerome. His hands are like steel, and he holds his feet so straight when he walks that he looks pigeon-toed, and he steps one foot just ahead of the other. His eyes are black and like a hawk's, and his chin is as square as a block. He's got an awful temper, but he holds on to it like grim Death; for he says what's the use of being a Catholic if you don't do what you are told? He hates swearing and drinking, and says lies are too mean for a *man* to tell. He hasn't got much manners—pokes his knife in his mouth, don't like to wear collars, and that. His French is correct, but a little queer in accent. His English though—oh, my! it *does* get tangled up now and then! He studies like a steam-engine; and when I get tired and yawny, I just *look* at him, and I brace up right off. It makes me feel like Aunt Nell's 'Mr. Wemmick,' who thought he'd washed his hands and lunched if he badgered a client.

"Robertin swims like a fish, and is teaching me: and I'm learning to swing clubs and dumb-bells. Your loving son, Bob."

The second letter, which came in the night-train, was delivered at the same time:

"I've just gone all the way through the grounds. It's the prettiest place I ever saw.

The whole stretch is flat as a table, and green as velvet, and there are big trees, and the buildings and quarters are scattered around. Old Fort Severn is at the end opposite the gate. It's the Gym. (gymnasium) now, and the Boat-House with the paper shells and the fancy singles is off near the Steam House. The other boats—lap-streaks and cat-boats—are under cover by the wharf, and the balsas and catamarans float between the ships. The Steam House is immense! I don't mean big, you know, but swell, and because what's in it is of such value. Then there's the Gunnery; I think I like that best. It's got everything in it that shoots, from Mexican bronze to gatling guns. And oh, the flag's there that Hugh McKee captured at Sun-tol-mok! He was a young Lieutenant from Kentucky, and when the citadel (it was in the Corea) was attacked, he ran ahead of all the storming party, and was the first man inside the works. He reached out to seize the flag, and one Corean ran him through with a pike, and one shot him. Then the blue-jackets and marines came swarming up in the face of the gingalls, stones, shot, and flying dust ;* and before his body was cold

* In this engagement the Coreans fought with most desperate valor, using everything they could lay hand on to repel the assault, even picking up their cannon bodily, and hurling them at our men; they also cast dust by the handful in the faces of their assailants, the close hand-to-hand conflict making it possible.

the fight was over, and the flag wrapped around him. It's a great, enormous square of yellow stuff, with a big black dragon romping all over it; and on it are some dark stains made by McKee's blood. His father was an army officer, and got killed just the same way in Mexico—the first man inside the enemy's works, and shot down before he could grasp the flag.

"The Seamanship Room's fine, too. Everything in it is about ships; and there's one little thing the fellows call 'The Teazer.' It's a flat round block with all the points of the compass on it, and in the center is a little short mast running up through the middle, with a wooden sail, and the sail turns on it like a pivot, and the fellows have to tell how to trim and set sail according as the wind blows.

"But I reckon maybe the Armory's the prettiest, after all. The guns stand down the sides of the wall, like that piece of Longfellow's which Aunt Nell made me learn once:

> "'This is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,
> Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;
> But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing
> Startles the villages with strange alarms.'

The howitzers are set in the middle, and the cutlasses and bayonets and pistols are fixed in stars and shields and triangles, and lots of pretty shapes, between the gun-racks. The rammers and sponges stand around, and there are the

guidons and things. The big cigar torpedo is here too. If it had worked all right, it would have been something like that jolly *Nautilus* of Jules Verne. But it didn't.

"Next to the bloody flag, the best thing I saw was the boat Lieut. Talbot * made his journey of 1,600 miles in. It's only a gig; and it was winter, and he went to bring help to his shipmates, who were wrecked on an unknown reef in the Pacific, 'way out of the track of vessels. Don't you remember, Jim McLean's Uncle Jack told him about it, and he told me? It made me feel so funny to look at it and think about it; just like the Captain felt when he left home—'a marble in my throat that got as big as an apple,' and the tears kept coming. I was sort of ashamed to be crying that way, and I kept sniffing and gulping and—blowing my nose, till somebody spoke up behind me: 'Dawn't be ashamed o' tears like them, boy. Men as old and tough as me piped their eye when Talbot died.' I jumped like sixty; but when I looked I could have hurrahed; for there was a regular-built old salt—one of Father Jerome's 'shell-

* For Talbot's daring and fatal journey, see "THE AVE MARIA" of July 11, 1885.

The boat is now [I hear to my great regret] on the Pacific slope, where, however, it is preserved with care and veneration.

backs.' He made me think of the old chap in the 'Bab Ballads,'—

> "'His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
> And weedy and long was he.'

I'm going to cultivate his acquaintance.

"I went to the chapel to see the tablet to Lieut. Talbot; and I tell you it's a mighty solemn thing to think if you do any special service or any good thing for your Government or your shipmates, that your name's put up for everybody to read and honor as long as people last. It sort of pokes you up with a sharp stick, and makes you feel you mustn't be satisfied to just lump along, or drift with the tide.

"There are some big monuments. The best one is to Herndon—the fellow that stood on the bridge of his ship and went down as calmly and bravely as if he were going into port. The Tripoli fellows have a daisy one too. One of them was a midshipman, not more than eighteen years old; and he'd got hold of a spar when his ship went down, and was floating round safely; but he saw a sailor he knew struggling in the water. He couldn't swim, and he had a wife and some children. So the young fellow shoved the spar to him, and said (it would only float one): 'Take it, Jack; for you have a wife and children; there isn't anybody dependent on me.' And then he raised his hands, and joined them

over his head, and looked up once, and said: 'God have mercy on my soul!' Then he sank, and never came up any more.

"Your loving BOB."

How we talked over those letters! They were read and re-read, until before the first week was out they began to look worn and old. We thought with always increasing satisfaction of the "queer lot" from Michigan, and were glad our boy was associated with such a safe acquaintance during the anxious days preceding the examination.

That examination! I think Bob's mother was tempted daily to pray that he would not pass, so she could have him home again, but she bravely conquered herself, and we said the Rosary every morning for his success.

IX.

After two anxious weeks came a telegram:

"Passed. Average 98. Hurrah! Bob."

Father McDonald himself brought it from the station, so we could have it the sooner; and he seemed as pleased as we were at the good news it contained. Our first impulse was to pack a valise and rush immediately to Annapolis, but he advised us not to go until Bob was fairly settled. So we contented ourselves with sending telegrams, writing copious letters, and packing off a hamper of substantials and sweetmeats that would have given our boy dyspepsia for a week if such a disease were catalogued "in the bright lexicon of youth."

His letters continued to be the chief events of our life, and were watched for, and talked about, and quoted, until I expect our friends wished the dear fellow would ship aboard the *Flying Dutchman*—a craft which

(I learned from Marryatt) never reaches port, but sails and sails, baffled, beaten back seaward from every harbor ; driving always in the teeth of the fiercest gales ("sailing in the wind's eye," *he* called it); and as its crew speak the Dutch of Van Tromp and Barnevelt, but few can understand the ghostly skipper's hails !

As soon as our boy passed his examination—before he got his commission, before even a seam of his uniform was sewed—he began to speak of the Navy as "we," and, allowing for a certain amount of innocent swagger, he learned the deeper lessons of his new life well. For instance, in one letter he said :

"Robertin and I went out sailing to-day in a cat-boat with old Haxall. He's the greatest old fellow ! You ought to see the knots he can tie, and the embroidery he can do—stars, shields, and mermaids. You'd just laugh to see him at it. His thimble is a strap of leather wrapped around his palm and tied with a string on the back. At the thick part of his thumb the leather stands out, and on that is a flat, roughened piece of brass. He sticks the needle in with his fin-

gers, and then shoves away with his palm-thimble, and he sews as quick as winking. And he's just a regular picture-gallery, he's so tattooed. He's got a full-rigged ship on his right arm, and a mermaid by that; and a sailor and a girl dancing a hornpipe on the other, with a pair of American flags crossed over them, and a shield under them. And he's got a crucifix over a foot long on his breast. He isn't a Catholic, but it was put there by an old Spanish sailor at Minorca, so he'd be sure of Christian burial if he was wrecked in the Mediterranean,* or on the South American coast, or on the shores of any Catholic country.

"Where was I? Oh, yes! We were out sailing, and when we came back we saw standing on the wharf a little man with great big black eyes, sharp features, and gray hair. Haxall touched his hat and bobbed his head, and the little man smiled a quick, short smile, and nodded, and when we got by he said:

"'Young gentlemen' (you see we belong to the Navy now, and he doesn't call us boys any more), 'thar's the bravest man in the United States sarvice.'

"'Who is he? What did he do?' I asked,

*Foreign Catholic sailors always have some symbol of their faith tattooed on them, to secure this privilege and the prayers and benefits of the Church.

scenting a story, and keen for it. And Robertin's big hawk-eyes turned on him like gimlets.

"'Nussed about thirty cases o' small-pox all by hisself in a furrin country, and *wolunteered* fur it too!'

"'But,' I stuttered, 'I thought he was an officer or something!'

"'*Is* an officer—a doctor, and the gamiest chap ever *I* see, and one of the affablest. He'll take off a leg or a arm as pleasant and quick, and let the bombs and the shot roar round jist as ef it were a picnic. I seen him during the war a few times. And my son Biram were out in Europe with the fleet when it all happened 'bout the small-pox. Thar was a lot of our wessels up in the North Sea, and fust thing they knowed the small-pox broke out furious. The men kept a-dropping with it, and presently the officers begun to ketch it. Thar was one, Biram says, as harnsome as a picter—a Leftenant Mason—and he got it too. But fast as they'd git it they'd be lifted in their hammocks and put ashore at Flushing, whar they was laid in a old sail-loft, and left. The doctor of the ship that had the most cases was off on leave in London, and the other doctors didn't appear over-anxious to take much 'sponsibility; so then up Doctor Turner comes a-sailin', and says 'I'll go'; and go he did. He were put ashore 'bout two bells in the arternoon,

and when he come to a certain pint he turned to Biram and says: 'Go to the burgo—something (some sort of a mayor or governor) and say my stores and supplies must be put on this stone, and that people mustn't come any farther. I'll leave my orders every night and morning, and they can get them; then I'll expect them twice a day.'—'Aye, aye, sir,' says Biram, and moves off brisk; fur, while he was sorry to leave the doctor, he were purty well satisfied to git out o' the way o' that lazaret.

"'Arterwards, Jim Haines, one of the men the doctor nussed, told Biram all about it. He says they was layin' thar: some on 'em conscious, some on 'em howlin'-crazy with fever, and some on 'em a-rollin' and a-tossin', and jist clawin' the flesh off their faces, when in steps the doctor 'My God!' says he, low and horrified—'my God, what an awful sight!' And he steps up to the fust sensible [sane] man, and says, 'What have you had to eat?'—'Nawthin', says the man, heavy and stupid.—'Why not?' says he, sharp as a razor.—'Thar ain't anything.'—'What!' says he; 'well, we'll fix that.' And out he sails.

"'Thar was a man a-goin' along off in the fields, wi' a big can in his hand, and the doctor hails him, and arsks him what's he got thar; and the man says 'Buttermilk'; and the doctor says he will buy it, and for him to put it thar, pintin' to

the big stone. And when the man puts it, the doctor tells him ef he'll bring a bar'l o' lime and two breshes he'll pay him fur it; and the man brings it. But 'tween whiles the doctor rakes round and finds an old biler an' an old coffee-pot, and gits a bag o' coffee out of his own stores. And fust, he gives the men the buttermilk, tell the coffee's done a-makin' in the biler,—them a-drinkin' out o' the spout, and the doctor a-holdin' of 'em up in his arms. Then he washes out the pot, and gives 'em coffee all around; and by that time his flannel blouse was in sich a awful mess he had to burn it up, and he was that overcome with the smells and sights he 'most faints. But he goes ahead, and biles up a lot o' water, and puts it in a slush-bucket, and goes aroun' and washes off them men as ef they was babies. Then he arsks ef there's any more of 'em, and one man says yes, in the riggin'-loft. He starts out to go up into the riggin'-loft, and the whole ship's crew of 'em sets up a yell for God A'mighty's sake not to leave 'em; and the fever-crazy ones jines in the yellin', cause the others hollos; so 'twas most like a menage-*ri*. The doctor he winks the tears off his eye-winkers, and says he wouldn't leave 'em for nawthin'; but he must go up and give their shipmates somethin' to eat, and wash 'em down, and he does; when he gits through he comes down, and wheels

in that thar bar'l, mixes up the lime, and white-washes that thar place fore and aft.

"'And he keeps that up for fourteen blessed days, havin' to burn the blouses he wears every day, they bein' sich a sight from his liftin' and holdin' and nursin' them poor, festered chaps; and the only help he had was from sich of the men as wasn't too sick to git about. And he saves 'em *all;* and that thar leftenant warn't even scarred.

"'And when it was all over, you jist oughter seen the lumpin' big set o' silver the fleets [American and English] give him, with a 'scription cut with flourishes; and everything topped off wi' a big dinner, and speeches, and a hip, hip, hurrahing fit to blow off your head. Yes, sir, that thar man's a 'onor to his cloth.'

"I've tried to tell it just as he did, and Robertin has helped; but it loses half of what it's worth not to *see* him tell it. He spins first-rate yarns. Here's another:

"There's a little Ass't-Paymaster here who is as airy as all out-doors. He's so bent upon having people pay him proper respect, that he makes a regular-built goose of himself. He puts on an awful lot of style, and if you don't treat him as if he was a Port-Admiral, he nearly blows the place up root and branch. One day he was going by, and Haxall either didn't smile at him

or did smile at him, or didn't bow low enough to suit him, or something, but he turned on him in a towering rage, his voice actually trembling, and told him *he'd* teach him to treat his superior officers with disrespect (and then he swore a blue streak), and that he'd report him to the officer-of-the-day. When he got by, Robertin and I both told Haxall not to bother, for if he was hauled up we'd testify for him. 'He's like a Quaker gun,'* said Haxall — 'piles of appearance, but no damage done. 'Sides, he knows the officer-of-the-day would have a 'vestigation, and he knows he's used language onbecomin' a officer and a gentleman. You see, swearin' in action or a gale o' wind's one thing, and when you're cool it's another. Respect your superiors is a fust principle in the sarvice, but I'll be blowed ef it don't take all the shoulder-straps and brawss buttons goin' to make me remember some o' em *is* superiors, the way they behaves.'

"Then he was quiet for a few minutes, sucking at his pipe, and looking down the river. After a while he began again :

"'Naw, I ain't got no use for paymasters, and greasers, and sich. They're good in their place, but when it comes to callin' of 'em Cap'n and Leftenant, an' givin' 'em salutes, an sich a pile o' gold lace an' jaw-tackle, it jist turns me

*A wooden cannon.

sick. I never seen but two that suited me, but I tell you *they jist did!*

"'One was aboard the old *Varuna*, the purtiest old gal that ever curtcheyed to blue water. She were built on the Mystic, fur a blockade runner, but they chaps didn't finish her in time. The war broke out afore she were off the stocks, and then the owners sold her to the Gov'ment, and she were with the old man's [Farragut] fleet down on the Mississippi. We'd had a gay old fight a-passin' the forts [Jackson and Philip]; and the *Varuna* she'd sunk six ships, and began to go down herself. We stayed tell the guns was level with the water, workin' to git the wownded out. We'd stuck to it in the sick-bay tell the dissectin' tables was a-floatin', and cut-off legs and arms was a-cruisin' 'round independent. But we had only one little block and tackle; and this fellow—he was the paymaster's clerk, and his name were Benjamin F. D. Fitch—jist stood in the companion-way and says, 'Hist 'em on my back'; and he took the last three or four, by turn, and carried 'em up to safety. Then we was told off for the boats, and what'd that chap do but go tearin' down below, sayin' he must be true to his trust, or some sich words!

"'Well, he didn't come up, though we was over the side layin' on our oars a-watchin' fur him; and the old gal began to settle, and we had

to pull off to git out o' the suck and swell she'd make a-goin' to her grave. But we kep' a sharp lookout, and when the wet was a pourin' in the scuppers, up he comes a-tearin', and fit his way through the water to the mizzen-mast, and began a-climbin' like a sailor-born, hand over hand a-kitin'. When he got to the top he jist hangs on as cool as a cowcumber tell he was fetched off, for arter all the old gal sunk slow and on an even keel. And, ef you'll bleeve me, what that thar little rooster had gone back for was $5,000 —the men's pay—that had been put in his charge. And he'd stopped to pick out a dupelcate roll, so he could keep his accounts straight. That's the sort o' chap for me every time! And the old man he was jist tickled to death, and permoted him right off for gallant and mer'torious conduct. And he desarved it.

"'The other were a dandy chap, named Slamm. I've heern he'd go to parties in a swaller-tail coat lined wi' white satin, and wi' lace cravats, and di'monds.—Fac'!—But ef thar war a fight, they jist *couldn't* keep him out of it, though paymasters is expected to stay in a safe place. One day when the firin' was most oncommon heavy, the cap'n said to him: 'Mr. Slamm, *will* you go below! This is the fifth time I have spoken, sir.' 'No, sir,' says he, bold as brawss; 'no, sir, I won't go below. I'm a non-combatant, and can stay

where I please during the fight.' The cap'n grinned. 'All right,' says he; 'git out, and if your head's blown off don't blame *me!*'—An' that chap helped worked a gun tell his own sweetheart wouldn't a-knowed him, he were that grimed and smoked. But he had a rare good time crackin' his jokes, an' showin' his little white teeth; and arter that they let him alone, and he fit where he pleased and when he pleased.'

"Aren't those good stories?

"I got a letter from Father Jerome. I send it with this; but please send it right back, for I want it; and Robertin has asked for a copy of it; he says it's a good Rule of Life.

"I'm beginning to see that being in the service isn't only brass buttons and blue water and hurrah, but a work for life, just like anything else. And I mean, with the help of God and Our Lady, to try to be the kind of 'officer and gentleman' Father Jerome describes.

"This is a regular 'log'; I've written a little every day for nearly a week, and as it's Saturday I shall wind up. Your loving Bob.

"P. S.—Can I have a mermaid tattooed on my arm?"

Father Jerome's letter was so like the man, in its simplicity and earnestness, that I quote it entire:

"I am heartily glad, my dear boy, that you have begun so well. Devote yourself to it with all your strength and energy; for to be 'an officer and a gentleman' requires earnest endeavor, great watchfulness, and incessant prayer. Why? Because in order to fit yourself to command others you must have yourself well in hand; to lead others you must become an intelligent, prudent, and brave man; to fulfil your trust before God and man, you must set a good example. An upright life and clean habits bring not only the blessing of Heaven, but such is the goodness of God that they yield a material prosperity and reward on earth. In your dealings with men, do to others as you would be done by; and try always to keep Mary, the Lily of Nazareth, in your mind, as the standard of what a woman ought to be. Steer clear of bad company, for the Wisdom of Ages said, 'By their fruits you shall know them.'

"Take your fling of fun, for it is the salt of life,—*real* fun. But, O my boy! beware of 'seeing life,' as it is carelessly called; for in the sins lightly known as 'sowing wild oats' too many see death—aye, and taste it too, body and soul.

"God bless you.

"Yours in Christ,

"JEROME."

X.

TIME was flying rapidly now. Only one more day of civilian's life lay between our boy and the appointed opening of the Academy. His last letter was a budget, and contained, besides a *resumé* of all his hopes and plans, a rapturous account of the entry into port of the training squadron. It bristled with technicalities, and we lost ourselves hopelessly in trying to pronounce and understand "foretopgallant-sails," "spanker-booms," "reefs," "shrouds," "ratlines," "tacks," "peaks," "bobstays," and "belaying pins." One sentence I remember, although I never expect to understand it. Here it is:

"Isn't it funny, the smallest thing in the ship has the longest name! I'll spell it as it is written: 'Foretopgallant studdingsail-boom-tricing-line-block strap-thimble.' Ain't that a whizzer? But you must pronounce it the 'foreto-g'lant-stunsell-boom,' etc."

He told us also the story of good Father Freitag, the priest whose touching history teaches of a martyrdom as noble as one of rack and fire, sword and block, but whose meek hands have now laid down life's cross at those Wounded Feet before which rank, fame, affection, and worldly honor were so gladly cast in sacrifice fifteen years ago.

Bob's narrative ran:

"There was a Prussian ship in, and one of the junior officers died. He was a Catholic, and they brought him ashore to the church, and had a grand *Requiem* Mass. A lot of us 'plebes' were there, and a good many of the officers; and it happened I had a seat that was in the side aisle, but on a level with the Germans. There was one man with the handsomest face I ever saw, but it was so proud and sneering that the good looks were somehow spoiled; and he seemed so bored, and fidgeted about so much, that I watched him a good deal more than I did my prayer-book. Father Freitag was saying Mass, and once as he turned at *Dominus vobiscum*, the Prussian I was telling about had just squared himself round, and was staring at the altar. Suddenly he gave a start, and a sort of shiver went over him; but he straightened up as if he'd

swallowed a ramrod, and his lip curled; and then he sat tugging at his mustache, with his eyes half shut, all the rest of the Mass. When Father Freitag came down to the coffin, to read the burial service, he spoke a few words; and as his eyes moved from one to the other, they fell on the officer I mean. He stopped short in the middle of what he was saying, the sprinkler fell from his hand, and he staggered to one side, so that Father Martin caught his arm. His face was white as chalk, and he exclaimed: '*Du, du, mein bru—!*' There was a great hustling and bustling in the sanctuary, but the officer looked as cold as ice, and swept his eyes over Father Freitag as if he was an ash-heap, or something else not worth looking at. He (Father F.) pulled himself together, and, in that way he has—so gentle, and yet so firm and dignified,—waved Father Martin aside with a few thanks, and came to the coffin and finished the service.

"Then I looked closer, and began to see that he and the officer were as like as two peas, though Father Freitag's hair is thin and gray, his eyes as mild as that picture of St. Francis that hangs over your wash-stand, and his mouth so gentle and sweet; and he stoops and looks old. Then I began to wonder, and when we got out of church I asked Robertin if he noticed it, and he said yes, and that he believed they were

brothers; for somebody told him Father Freitag was a Prussian count or baron, and had a great deal of trouble, and took the name 'Freitag' (it means Friday) out of devotion to the sufferings and death of Our Lord.

"The Commodore gave a dinner to the Prussians the day after the funeral (they were going away the next morning at daybreak), and some one said to this Lieut. von ——: 'Sad thing about that poor fellow yesterday.' 'Ah,' said he, 'is he dead?' 'Dead?' said the other man; 'I should fancy so, as he was buried.' 'Ah, you mean Von Buschkirche; I thought you meant that renegade brother of mine, who created a scene by fainting, or something of the sort.' 'Your brother?' said the Commodore, astonished. 'Did you not know?' replied Lieut. von ——. 'How should I?' answered the Commodore. 'Has he, then, actually had the good taste to conceal his name? Degenerate in everything, a disgrace to his race, I am surprised he still feels a thrill of pride, or remembers *noblesse oblige*.' 'How, my dear sir,' said the Commodore, 'degenerate, disgraced? Why, Father Freitag is highly respected. *I* always thought him a good man.' 'Oh,' said Von ——, carelessly, 'he has never committed murder, or arson—' 'And he is your *brother?*' went on the old Commodore. 'He *was* my brother,' said Von ——; 'but since his apostasy,

since he turned Papist, and chose to herd with an ignorant rabble, and has adopted the garb and life of a priest, he is marked on the family rolls as one dead. I should not object to it, however, for I succeeded to the title and estates. But it is an uninteresting subject. Let us talk of something else.' 'Excuse me, sir, one moment,' said the old Commodore, whose heart is as big as a 74-line-of-battle; 'it can not be possible you mean to leave here without seeing your brother?' 'That,' Lieut. von —— answered, 'is just what I *do* mean to do. What fine roses these are!' The Commodore snorted like a grampus, but he was in his own home, and couldn't do anything but shut up then; but he talked all over the place about it when Lieut. von —— was gone. Next day he pegged up to the church, and called on Father Freitag, and this is what he says about his visit:

"'Egad, I opened fire as soon as he came in, and I said, 'I am distressed, sir, I am grieved, sir, that any man calling himself a sailor should behave so, sir; and your own brother, too!'—'Ah, well,' said he, with a smile so confoundedly sad that it twisted my heart-strings into a knot—'ah, well, he *is* my brother, my dear brother; and it is only that he does not understand the beauty and glory of the Faith; so we will say no more about

it.'—'But, sir,' 'I said, 'I have come to invite you to dinner, to meet the officers who heard the conversation; for we wish to show you our feeling in the matter.'—And, confound the man! though he said he didn't dine out any more, he made himself so agreeable I stayed a full hour; yes, sir. I tell you these Catholics are a queer lot. They actually seem to *enjoy* trouble and suffering; and as to giving up rank and position, they just delight in it.' And he puffed away like a jolly old tug-boat, and now he can hardly say enough about Father Freitag.

"Well, to-morrow I begin regular studies, drills, gymnastics, and hard work generally. I have read the regulations until I know them by heart, and their name is legion. Some of them are pretty stupid; for instance, it's as much of a 'break' to leave your shoestrings untied, or one button of your coat unbuttoned, as it is to miss a question at recitation, and you get a demerit for it just the same; but Robertin says these small things train the memory, and that a well-ruled life is made up of details. He expects to have an awful time of it, for he isn't up in the little fads, as I told you before; and so he looks for 'rough weather, and breakers ahead.' But he squares that jaw of his, and says to me: 'I mean to learn; and you, Robert [he pronounces it *Ro-bair*, with a regular French twang], must help

me ; for I see *you* are as the others.' He's asked me to room with him. There's a fellow here I like tremendously, and I had meant to ask him to be my room-mate, but I didn't like to refuse old 'Steady,' and so *that's* settled ; and if it doesn't work, why, we'll shift at Christmas.

"My uniform's come, and it's a beauty. It fits like wax ; and if it wasn't for the pile of padding in front, it would be as easy as my skin ; but they have to pad us a regulation-curve, so as to look well on the parade-line ; and so there you are!

"I feel tremendously excited about to-morrow —'the thrill of life along the keel,' I reckon ; for I *am* slipping off the stocks, you know, and starting out on my first cruise. Lord grant that I may prove seaworthy, and fetch up in the port I'm bound for!

"After this, direct to 'Cadet Midshipman Adair, U. S. N.'

"Your loving

"Bob."

PART II.

I.

It was a perfect day in October; or, as that irrepressible young person, Cadet Midshipman Robert Adair, put it, it was "tarred with Autumn's best brush, and no expense spared."

The soft hills of the Severn rose clear and warm from the blue water; the trees were flaming in red and yellow; the practice-ships courtesied lightly to each other, as the white-caps raced in from the bay; and the echoes of the "hugag" * drifted from the busy Academy grounds, and lost themselves in the soft silence of Cemetery Point, where so many of the officers and seamen "keep their last watch below."

On the parade ground, near the Herndon

* All the calls to recitation, drill, etc., are given with the bugle, which is called by the middies, the "hugag."

monument, a division of the corps were going through howitzer-drill, their active young figures alert in every muscle: wheeling, swinging, breaking ranks and re-forming; while the glittering brass "barkers" ran swiftly after, impelled by dozens of sturdy arms.

Off by the armory, another division were going through infantry-drill, their white-gloved hands and shining muskets flying through the air at each word of command, as if moved by machinery. Still another division were tramping, in boat crews, down the shaded walks to the sea-wall for boat-drill, their loose white canvas overalls and blouses (with their numbers and surnames conspicuously blazoned in black paint) giving them a business-like appearance, in nowise belied by the dexterity with which they slipped into their places, "tossed" their oars, "let fall," and "gave way."

And, finally, well under the lee of the armory wall, a small squad of six "plebes"

were being initiated in the drill-mysteries by a senior classman. "Right, left, present, ground, recover, order, parade rest," over and over and over the same words; and in response the same struggle for unanimity, and the same imperfect result, until the call for supper sounded, and the exhausted party gladly responded.

Two of the six were the two Roberts—Adair and Robertin; another, a merry little Japanese named Saito; a fourth, an Irish lad from the public schools of New York; the fifth, a melancholy, dark-eyed boy of fourteen; and the sixth, the fellow Bob wanted so to room with when he first entered—a handsome, audacious youth, with sunny blue eyes, tip-tilted nose, bright color, and much grace of bearing.

As they came out of the armory, after putting their muskets in their racks, and were hurrying to "formation," Dacre Peyton whispered to Bob:

"I say, Adair, that 'Kanuck'" (the

name he had given Robertin) "will be the death of me! I didn't hear half Ludlow was saying for looking at him. Did you see him grip his musket as if it was a well-sweep? I'll bet you one to five he left the prints of his fingers in the stock."

"Oh, he's all right," said Bob, smiling brightly, and hurried along, leaving Peyton grumbling, as he fell back to chaff the "Kanuck"; but the latter was bending down to little Dalrymple, who dragged himself heavily along.

"What is it, *mon gars?*"

"Nothing," answered the boy, bravely; but as he lifted his eyes, Robertin saw heavy rings under them, and he repeated the question. The child straightened himself, and again said, "Nothing," and it stopped there; for just then Peyton clapped him on the back, and said:

"Hi there, youngster, step out! What's the matter? Played out? You look ready to cry. Well, you *are* a Miss Nancy!"

The little fellow shrunk away with blazing eyes, and a few seconds later they all "fell in," and filed into the mess-hall, with appetites so well whetted by exercise that there was small chance for conversation until the half hour was out. Then, just before leaving their table, Bob said:

"I say, old Steady" (his pet name for Robertin), "how do your arms feel?"

"All right. Why?"

"Well, mine feel as if they'd been pulled out of place. That musket must have weighed forty pounds." And he laughed blithely.

"Ah!" said Robertin, thoughtfully. Then he looked up:

"Robert" (he always pronounced it Robair), "did you see that little one—Dalrymple? Look at him now."

And Bob saw the tired face, and, more significant still, he scarcely touched supper.

"He looks fagged out. Is he sick, or—by Jove, no: he had one of those beastly heavy guns, too, this afternoon! Why, the

poor chap must be as stiff as a ramrod!"

"That's it," said Robertin. "I knew you'd get at it." (And he looked affectionately at Bob.) "But we'll make it right to-morrow. Yes?"

"All right," said Bob, and they tramped off to studies.

Their division was quartered in Stribling Row, the quaint gray houses that run from the steamship building (where Andrew Jackson and the British *Macedonian*'s lion — two startling figure-heads — guard the front door) to old Fort Severn; and as they went along, they heard the halting tread of little Dalrymple's feet behind them.

"Let's wait," said Bob, impulsively.

Robertin nodded—he never wasted words.

"Well, chappie, pretty well used up, aren't you?"

"Yes," answered the boy, hesitatingly; "but I don't mind it," he added, quickly.

"*I* do," said Bob; "my arms ache like sixty."

"Oh!" said little Dalrymple, his eyes opening wide; then he looked shyly up at Robertin's great shoulders and strong face.

Bob laughed.

"You needn't look at *him.* He's tough as brickbats, and thinks it's all fine fun."

"Oh! yes," said Robertin, with grim sarcasm; "it's all fine fun, especially reduction and solution of equations!"

"O I don't mind *that!*" said Dalrymple.

"What!" said Robertin, stopping short, and opening his great hawk-eyes.

"Whew!" whistled Bob.

The boy looked abashed, but said:

"That's nothing, you know; for I've been at Algebra ever since I was a little chap." (Bob grinned at this.) "But the drills are what get me. They make me feel so queer and heavy! The oars are so long, and the guns too. And to-day was worse than ever; for I have some smashed fingers."

"Let's see," said Bob, and he took up the child's hand, looked at it, and called out:

"Steady, look here! You little goose,"—to the boy,—"why didn't you go to the hospital this morning at sick-call?"

"And have them think me a Miss Nancy, as Peyton calls me? I *hate* Peyton!"

"*Chut, gars!*" said Robertin, "that's an ugly word to say, and an uglier thing to do. Ah! the poor little hand,"—taking it up, and examining carefully the torn nails and livid bruises. "Come and have it dressed."

"No," said the boy, hanging back; "I don't want to go to the doctor."

"Well, come with me, then, and I'll play doctor."

And the three hurried along to "Boffin's Bower," as Bob had christened their room, "because," as he ingeniously explained, "there isn't anything like a bower about it."

Robertin went to his wardrobe, hauled out a small box, and began unscrewing a tin case. As he took off the top, a pungent smell was diffused through the room, and he came toward the two.

"This is something an old squaw gave

my mother forty years ago. She said it would heal any bruise in twenty-four hours, and we'll try it. But I have no bandage."

"Here," said Bob, tearing one of his best handkerchiefs into strips; "here you are!"

And he stood by, watching with some surprise the skilful and expeditious way in which Robertin did his work.

Little Dalrymple's face relaxed, and he heaved a long sigh of relief:

"Thanks, awfully! And if you *do* really get stumped on equations, I'd be so glad to tell — to show you — that is, if you don't mind," he ended with some embarrassment.

"Not I," said Robertin, heartily; "I thank you."

And his eyes looked so kind that the child smiled back with light and color in his face, showing as he did so two deep dimples.

"Why," said Bob, "what a pretty little chap you are! The fellows will be sure to call you Dotty Dimple as soon as they get a good look at you." (And some of them did, by the way, to the end of the chapter.)

"Oh," said the boy, distressed, "don't put them up to it, please!"

"I won't," said Bob, promptly; "honor bright." And a glance into his eyes satisfied the sensitive boy of his truthfulness.

"May I see how your pictures are fixed?" said he to Robertin, as the latter replaced his box. "I had *such* a time getting mine to stay on the door; and I was mad as a hornet when I found I couldn't hang anything on the walls. It's a stupid rule. Why can't we have pictures and things?"

Bob answered:

"You see, some of the fellows are rich as nabobs, and some of them—well, some of them are not; so the Secretary said: 'Simplicity is a good thing in its way, and uniformity will save bad feeling and envy and debt.' So there you are!"

Robertin meantime opened his wardrobe door (the inside of which at the Academy always serves the cadet as a photograph gallery); in its center was a cheap but well-colored lithograph of the Madonna of the

Chair, with a gray-haired, sad-faced woman on one side, a venerable French priest on the other, and a cabinet photo. of Bob.

Dalrymple looked puzzled. At last he said, hesitatingly:

"That's pretty. Who is it?"

"The Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Our Lord."

"Oh," said Dal, and seemed more puzzled than ever.

"You are not a Catholic, I reckon?" said Bob.

"No; no indeed!"

"But," said Bob, "of course you know something about Our Blessed Lady?"

"No; I don't. You see," said the boy, confidentially, "I never had anybody talk religion to me, any way; for my mother died when I was a little chap like that" (pointing to the Divine Child), "and then the house was shut up; and father didn't do anything but sit and read and read, from morning until night; and I used to stay all the time in the library, and read too. I

didn't care to play (there weren't any children), so I just stayed around with father."

Then he stopped. "The Blessed Virgin —let me see! I remember *something* about that name. Oh, yes!" he said triumphantly, "it was in the Koran!"

The two Roberts looked at each other aghast, and were silent from sheer dismay. The Koran! To think of hearing of Our Lady first there!

The boy glanced from one to the other, and flushed.

"I hope," he said, earnestly, "I haven't said anything you mind? I wouldn't be such a cad, after you have been so kind." And his big eyes went pleadingly up to Robertin's and then to Bob's.

"Of course not," said the latter, heartily, if a trifle incoherently. "But didn't you ever read the New Testament?"

"No," said the boy, musingly. "I remember something queer about that too. I found a book one day, and began to look through it. In every picture there was a

Man with a face as sweet and gentle as my mother's portrait" (his hand went toward his throat half unconsciously), "and in every one of them He was doing something kind. And in one He was sitting, with a crowd of little children round Him. I liked that so much I picked it up, and went to ask my father about it; and as I went I saw that name on it — New Testament. When I showed it to him, and wanted him to tell me about it, he answered: 'I can not. It is a beautiful delusion.' Then he gave a great groan, and said: 'Oh, to believe! oh, to believe!' and then he fell over in a faint; and I never dared ask him any more, or show him the book again, or look at it myself."

Here he stopped, and Bob impetuously began:

"But, I say, chappie, you ought to see a priest—"

Robertin interrupted:

"He will have to get permission from home, Robert."

"I haven't any home; father is dead," said Dalrymple, looking up from the picture, in which he seemed quite absorbed.

"Well, then," said Bob, joyously, "that's all right. Ask the commandant to let you go out to church with us on Sunday, and we'll take you to see Father Grotius."

But again Robertin interrupted:

"Perhaps there is some one who takes his father's place. Discipline, you know, and lawful authority."

"Right, old Steady!" said Bob, heartily. "Have you a guardian?"

"Yes," said Dalrymple; "but he won't mind. He's one of the Stock Exchange in New York, and doesn't care for anything but his dear 'shorts' and 'longs.'"

"Still, it is better to write," said Bob; "and I'd do it to-night."

"I will. There goes the call for studies. Good-night!" And off he ran.

II.

THE next day was Saturday, and as the morning gun fired, and the roll of the *reveillé* echoed over the water, the *Angelus* sounded from the bell-tower of the church in town. Though half asleep, Bob instinctively crossed himself, and began the beautiful prayer; and, as he said it, through his mind flitted the story he had heard the night before.

"Poor little beggar!" he thought. "No religion, no mother here or up aloft" (he meant Our Blessed Lady, and no disrespect either); "no Sacraments! Whew! he's in an awful way—"

Here the din of the drum ceased, and he sprang up and into his uniform, whisked his room in order, made his bed, and dropped on his knees for a few minutes before he and Robertin started for roll-call. After this, and the inspection (in the course of

which Bob got a demerit for a vest-button out of place, and Robertin another for a loose shoestring), came breakfast, and it was during this meal that Robertin said:

"We mustn't forget little Dalrymple, Robert. We'll get permission to see about it during 'sick-call.'" And immediately after prayers* they did.

As they went up the steps of the commandant's office, Robertin's Indian blood came to the surface, and laid its spell of silence upon him. "You must speak, Robert," he said; "I can not well enough." So, as the two lads stood before the commandant, Bob raised his eyes to the somewhat unamiable countenance before him (the officer had gout that morning), and said:

"We've come, sir, to see if we can get little Dalrymple off from drill."

"Why, Mr. Adair?"

* Which consist, at the Academy, in the recitation aloud, by the entire corps, of the "Our Father." The young men stand in a double line, just before leaving the mess-hall, and, in measured tones, voice this beautiful prayer, which is selected as acceptable to all creeds, and peculiarly appropriate to these young lives needing guidance.

"He's got a smashed hand, sir."

"Send him to the surgeon, then; don't bother me about it."

"But he won't go, sir."

"Won't, eh? And sent you to beg him off? He's melingering.* I'll send for him, and give him a piece of my mind!"

"Oh, my wig and feathers!" said Bob, in great dismay; "that would be awful! Please don't, sir. Why, he doesn't even know we've come, and he'd be as mad as Dick Tucker if he found out!"

The commandant was somewhat taken aback, for he was little used to such lack of ceremony; but he saw no disrespect was intended, and, moreover, people rarely failed to be attracted by Bob's earnestness.

"What do you mean, Mr. Adair?"

"Why, sir, last night, when Steady—I mean Robertin" (and Bob blushed at his slip) "happened to find out his hand was hurt—he was cheering the little chap up, you know, sir—we wanted him to go to the

* This is the term in common use at the Academy for shamming sickness so as to shirk work.

doctor, and he just vowed point-blank he wouldn't, because he didn't want to seem Miss-Nancyish. So we got out of him that the drills were very hard on him, because the muskets are so heavy, and the oars so long, and—and—that, sir. Then Robertin said we must do something, and we thought the best thing was to come to you. He's such a scrap of a boy—"

"Who?" said the officer—"Robertin?"

At this Bob grinned in the most appreciative manner, but answered:

"No, sir; *this* is Robertin."

"Well," said the commandant (now, that the twinge was over, he rather enjoyed the simplicity of the two Roberts in bringing such a matter to him), "what do you want me to do? I can't excuse him from drill altogether. What would *you* suggest?"—turning suddenly, and with a spice of malice on Robertin. He, much disconcerted, looked at the officer a moment before answering. Then:

"A small, light bird-gun, and a short oar, until his muscles come up, sir."

The commandant seemed surprised at the succinct answer, and took a keener look at the great fellow, with his square jaw and steady eyes. Then he nodded.

"We'll see. And now, my lads, it's nearly 8 o'clock; hurry off to formation. Before you go, though, I'm going to give you a piece of advice. You are in the service, and want to stay in it" (Bob nodded emphatically); "and discipline's the very soul of it. Next time you have a request to make, do it through the proper channel, and follow routine."

"It's my fault," said Robertin, quickly: "Robert did it for me."

"No, sir, it isn't," said Bob, with equal haste; "if there's any fault, it's mine."

The commandant glanced kindly at them, then said:

"No harm done, only a slight irregularity." And, as they saluted and hurried off, he stroked his beard thoughtfully, and said:

"As fine a pair of lads as I have ever

seen. Adair will make a dashing officer, and the young Hercules is as steady as a church. He'll be heard of some day, if I'm not mistaken. Now for that youngster."

He touched a bell, and sent his orderly to fetch up young Dalrymple.

The boy was called from the black-board in the recitation-room, where he was demonstrating a problem in a clear, brilliant way, that made Commander Baker's blue eyes twinkle, and his classmates stare. He hurried along, rapidly running over in his mind his daily routine, and wondering what was amiss. As a result, he reached the office looking paler and more delicate than ever.

The commandant fairly started at the fragile little figure that stood before him, with his right hand carefully held behind it.

"You wanted me, sir?" said Dalrymple, in his gentle voice.

"Yes, my lad; about the drill."

The boy's face flushed scarlet.

"I know, sir, I'm awfully awkward and slow, but I *do* try."

"It isn't that, but, you see, you are so young and small—" He hesitated.

"Every day makes that better," said Dalrymple, resolutely.

"So it does," said the officer, pleased with his spirit; "but don't you find the muskets heavy, and the oars unwieldy?"

Dalrymple half opened his lips, then shut them tight, and finally said:

"I'll get used to them."

"That's no answer. Do you—yes or no?"

"Then—yes, sir."

"Ah! by the way, hand me that book, if you please."

Dalrymple did it with his left hand.

"Why, how is this? Are you left-handed? That's what makes the drill awkward."

"No, sir; but my other hand—it got—it's a little hurt, sir,"

"Let me see."

And Dalrymple had to show it.

The commandant was really shocked; for, while the old squaw's salve had done much for it, it was still a very bad hand.

"I order you to the hospital."

Dalrymple looked up imploringly, and few could resist the appeal of those dark, soft eyes.

"Well?"

"Couldn't I keep up recitations, sir?"

"Well! well!" said the commandant, testily; "yes."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said Dalrymple.

That afternoon in the workshops a very pretty piece of work was done. A gunstock was made of pine wood; a tin barrel was fitted to it, a trigger and hammer were properly mounted, and the whole was painted and varnished; then, toward dusk, "by the commandant's orders," it was quietly slipped into Cadet Midshipman Dalrymple's place in the gun-rack, and no one in the corps was the wiser.*

And this little act of kindness was the way in which the two Roberts began their career.

* This had to be done several years ago for a little Philadelphian.

A week or so later Dalrymple rushed up to Bob, and handed him a letter.

"It's come at last! Read."

It was on the thickest of Irish linen paper, bearing the stamp of the Union League Club, and was written in a heavy, characteristic hand:

"My Dear Boy:—Go where you please, except to a Jewish synagogue; although, come to think of it, I really do not know why *I* should forbid even that, if you wish it. I'm not much of a church-goer myself, but I approve of the habit in other people; for religion is a good *civil* stay, if nothing more.

"I hope you are well, and I enclose a check for $50, knowing money always 'comes in handy' for a youngster. Write whenever you want anything. Yours faithfully,

"D. J. O——."

And Sunday morning the three started for St. Mary's. It was All Saints' Day, and the altar was blazing with lights and flowers. As the clergy and choristers filed in, and the quiver of the organ woke the echoes in the vaulted roof, a great emotion seized Dalrymple; as the sublime Sacrifice proceeded,

he became pale with the depth of his feeling. He followed every movement of the two Roberts, and listened to the sermon with eager interest. It was a good one too, its theme being the grandeur of Christian heroism as compared with even the most splendid triumphs of pagan Greece and Rome and the glory of modern heroes. The priest dwelt at some length on the short duration and the empty echo of worldly fame, and, in contrast, on the eternal reward and sublime canticles that crown and greet the spiritual victor. Then he spoke lovingly, enthusiastically, of the Queen of Saints, clothing her with the royal regalia of her Son's endowing — the mantle of purity, the crown of humility, the sceptre of mercy. So the dear little heathen Dalrymple learned more in an hour than he had ever heard in his life before.

After Mass they went in to see Father Grotius, who received them so pleasantly and cordially that the shy child was won instantly. He talked freely, and, with great

simplicity and directness, gave his reasons for coming. Yes, he would like instruction; not so much because he wanted to join the Church—for he hardly knew what that meant—but because Adair and Robertin were Catholics, and he had noticed a good many things about them different from the other fellows, and he liked them no end. What things? Well, they just seemed to take their religion for every-day use—they kept their tempers, didn't swear at things, tried to stop quarrelling, and didn't like low stories. "Why, when that beast Fl——" (here he bit his lip, and begged to be excused for having nearly said the name; of course he didn't mean to) "began to tell one the other day, Adair stepped up and told him to clap a stopper on his jaw-tackle—to stop, you know, sir. Then the fellow said he'd do as he pleased; and Adair told him if he said another word of it before me he'd knock him down."

Here Father Grotius looked at Bob with a twinkle (he and Robertin had been off

talking to Father Freitag), and said: "Muscular Christianity, eh?" which made Bob's face flame.

Dalrymple went on: "And Robertin said he was right. Then when I told him I was glad, for I thought such things were awfully bad form, he said it was worse than that: it hurt the soul." All that sort of thing, he added, set him to thinking ; and yet, somehow, they didn't poke religion at you, and weren't solemn and slow, and so on, and so on ; winding up by saying the services he had just attended were so different from anything he'd ever heard or seen, that he wanted to come to church any way, if Father Grotius would permit him.

The good priest led him to speak of his home, and when his mother was named the little fellow asked him, in the prettiest way imaginable, if he'd like to see her picture. Then he hauled it out by the chain that was around his neck, and handed it to him. As Father Grotius looked, he turned it, and read the inscription on the back; his face lighted up strangely.

"My child," said he, "do you know what this means?"

"'Child of Mary'? No, sir, I don't; and I've often wondered, because my grandmothers were named Judith and Margaret."

"It means that this dear young mother was a Catholic, and, by the mercy of God, you have come *home* for instruction."

The boys were deeply impressed by the incident, and much talk followed it; and when the priest gave Dalrymple a medal of Our Lady, he strung it on the same chain, and returned with fresh interest to the arrangements for receiving instruction.

III.

This bit in the inner lives of the three boys was a strong bond between them, and they became such cronies that they were called Bruin Major, Bruin Minor, and the Cub. They were all popular, but for widely different reasons—Bob, for his fun, which fairly bubbled over, and for his brains, which reflected a certain credit on the class; Dalrymple, for his mathematical genius and his—prettiness; and Robertin, because he carried off the champion belt from the first class in a "catch-as-catch-can" wrestling match, the night before Thanksgiving.

It was at the first gymnastic tournament of the year. All the officers and their families, some visitors, and many of the townspeople were present. The old Fort was crowded; and when Lanman, a sturdy, well-built first-classman, stepped into the ring, the building rang with applause. He had

many friends in the audience; his classmates backed him to a man, so did the second-classmen (from caste prejudice, as well as liking); and even the third-classmen were divided, although they and the fourth-class are supposed to hang together.

The boyish faces of the latter were anxious; for Robertin had not yet been really tested, and Lanman had the prestige of three years of victory. However, they talked learnedly of "wind" and "grit," "muscle" and "brawn," "trick" and "force," "trip" and "fall"; and when Robertin came forward, his head well back, his great muscles in relief, they fell into an absorbed silence, which was reflected by the other classes. Indeed, there was a perceptible thrill and stir through the place, and a general question as to who he was.

The two stood eyeing each other for a moment, and then, after shaking hands, made a rush, and for a few minutes whirled and turned in a close struggle, but without result; and this was repeated again and

again, until Lanman, nettled at the unexpected opposition, and hot with the "tug of war," lost his temper a trifle; *then* Robertin "closed" in earnest, and, seizing him in a grip such as his young bones had never felt, laid him neatly but smartly on the hair mattress provided for the fall.

Of course the row was tremendous, and Lanman by his graceful congratulations to his conqueror won to himself at least half the honors of the victory. However, he was heard to say in private, shortly afterward, that his ribs actually sprung when Robertin seized him; and that the fellow must have learned the grip from a grizzly bear, for he couldn't breathe comfortably for three or four days, from its effects. And it was after this that the word Bruin became a fixture to Robertin's name.

Bob, too, was good at gymnastics, but seamanship was the joy of his life, and he fairly pined for Saturdays; for on that day the *Wyoming* was boarded; the class in steam engineering got up steam, and ran

her out bayward, where the middies took possession, made sail, maneuvered her, and worked her home again.

His hours spent in splicing had an equal charm; he never tired of hanging around the working model of the *Antietam*, with its tracery of ropes and lines, and its cloud of sail; and it began to be noticed that at recitation whenever a fellow halted for an answer, Lieut. Peck would sing out, "Mr. Adair!" and Mr. Adair would "come up to the notch" handsomely every time.

I think there never was a happier boy in the Academy, and, as his enthusiasm was infectious, he won the good will of his officers by the example he set, and was the apple of old Haxall's eye. (Haxall was the gunner's mate, a regular old "shell-back," whose experiences and yarns were of a most thrilling nature.) Bob's sweet disposition stood him in good stead among the fellows, and his hot temper saved him from imposition and bullying; his capacity for chaff, too, was greatly admired, and he had quite a

reputation for fair judgment. But as this last always consisted in taking the disputants to Robertin, he chuckled derisively when he heard of it.

He was known to be "a religious chap," but "no duffer for all that," added those less fortunate ones who did not know that in Religion's warm sun germinate the seeds of joy and light-heartedness; and he was chaffed somewhat about it at first. This soon stopped, however; for he made his faith respected by living up to its tenets, and by always having an intelligent answer for the questions asked—even for those that displayed an ignorance as offensive as it was dense.

For instance. A third-classman dropped into their room one evening after studies, and as he roamed about in a restless fashion, he picked up Bob's prayer-book, and glanced through it. He happened to open it at the Litany of the Saints. After reading a few minutes, he said:

"Adair, do you really believe in this sort of thing?"

"What?" asked Bob.

"Why, that a lot of dead-and-gone fellows can do anything for you?"

"Of course I do," said Bob, tranquilly.

"Well, now, I like that!" Gilman went on, derisively. "What can they do?"

"Pray for me," said Bob.

"Pray for you!" repeated Gilman; "why, you can do that yourself."

"Yes," said Bob, "but one can't have too many prayers said for him; and it stands to reason that these 'friends of God' have a strong claim on His favor; for they lived for Him, worked for Him, and died for Him by the thousands."

"You worship them, though, and that's downright idolatry."

"We don't!" said Bob, with some heat. "We don't worship anything except God."

"But you have their images set up, and say your prayers to them."

"Do you say your prayers to the pictures of your mother, and your sisters, and your friends, that you keep on your wardrobe door?"

"Of course I don't," said Gilman, with a stare.

"What do you keep them for, then?"

"Why, to remind me of them, and because I love them."

"And that bust of Cæsar?"

"Why, because I respect and honor him. He's my pet hero, and I want to be like him."

"All right!" said Bob, with his own sunny smile; "you've hit the nail straight this time, my boy! We keep the saints' images and pictures to remind us of them—their virtues, their holiness, their deeds—so we can try to imitate them, and because we love them; and we ask them to pray for us just as you'd go to the court of a king, and ask those he loved most to help you to beg for any favor you wanted. See?"

Gilman looked reflective.

"Why," said Bob, a trifle impatiently, "it's the 'communion of saints,' don't you know? You say it in your Creed every Sunday, at the chapel."

"By Jove!" replied Gilman, slowly, if *that* is what it means, it *is* a grand idea! The— But look here, Adair," he broke off suddenly, "you *do* worship the Virgin Mary."

"No, sir!" said Bob; "but we love her, and honor her, and serve her next to God; for she is the greatest saint of all—the purest and the holiest. She must have been, you know," he added, simply, "for God to choose her for His Mother."

"But you are always praying to her."

"Of course," said Bob; "and when you were a little chap, was there ever a time when you you weren't asking *your* mother something, or getting her to back you up when you asked your father things?"

Gilman nodded his head.

"Well," said the boy, and his eyes shone with a tender light, "you see, she's our Mother, and—"

"But isn't all that rather superstitious and childish?"

"'Unless you become as little children you

shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,'" quoted Robertin, in his slow, grave voice, just as Bob said:

"Don't mix up superstition and faith! One is tares and the other is wheat."

"Well," said Gilman, "you two *are* a pair! Mind you," he added, with slow conscientiousness—he was a New Englander—"I don't say you are right, but I do say it's different from anything I ever heard about it all before; and there's something in it that seems reasonable, and yet pretty, and—and homelike; 'all in the family' you know, and that sort of thing. I could never do any of it, though. I disapprove of it on principle; for I do not think a religion good that allows people to commit all the sins they want to, and then go and be absolved."

"Well, *I* should say that was a religion fit for a wild Choctaw, or a fetich-worshiper on the Congo," answered Bob.

"Why, Adair, I thought—I've heard—isn't that what Catholics do at confession?"

"No!" said Bob, with an emphasis that

carried conviction. "Don't you know, unless you go to confession with deep, true sorrow for your sins, and a firm purpose not to do any of them again, and even to keep out of the way of things that might cause you to commit them, you can't get absolution?"

"Is that so?" replied Gilman, in great surprise. "Why, then, Adair," he added, with the air of one making a great discovery, "if that's true, I should think it might be a restraint?"

"It is," said Bob, in what he called his "dormouse and treacle-well" tone.* And the irruption of some ten or fifteen other fellows put an end to the discussion.

* See "Alice in Wonderland."

IV.

As Christmas was drawing near, it was decided that Dalrymple should be baptized that very day, and he asked Father Grotius if he might take the Blessed Virgin's name. The good priest said yes, remarking that it was by no means unusual in Catholic countries for men to bear it; but suggested that he should couple it with some other, for daily use. Dalrymple, however, with a pretty persistence (he was too gentle and well-bred to be rudely obstinate) urged his point, saying:

"You see, it was her picture first set me to asking questions; two of her boys got me started right; my mother was a Child of Mary; and, if I'm baptized on Christmas, I think Our Lord would like me to have His Mother's name. Then, too," he added, lower, "it will be a reminder all the time;

for I've got a quick temper, and the fellows *do* worry so, sometimes!"

Father Grotius raised only one more point.

"My child, this holy name must not be exposed to the ridicule of those who honor nothing, and respect not even their own immortality."

"No, sir," answered the boy, eagerly; "it shall not be. I'll try to be worthy of it, and only those who love the Blessed Virgin shall call me by it. You know," he added, with a smile, "down here I'm 'Dal,' and 'Dotty Dimple,' and 'The Cub'; and outside I'm generally 'Van,' for Van Alstine."

And Father Grotius smiled back into the young face, and in his heart he prayed that the child might indeed be worthy of the august patroness he had chosen.

Dalrymple asked Bob and Robertin to be his godfathers; but, as he knew no Catholic ladies, "he was," as Bob rather bluntly expressed it, "out a godmother," until—but I must not anticipate.

One day, just after the mail was distrib-

uted, Bob came tearing down the stairs, waving an open letter, and shouting like a Comanche. He "fetched up" in a bunch of his chums, one of whom—Brintnall—asked him, sarcastically, if he couldn't yell *one* tone higher.

"No," said Bob; "piracy on the high C [sea] is forbidden." Then, giving Robertin a resounding whack on the back, he said:

"They're coming for Christmas!"

Robertin's face lighted up, and he answered, "I'm glad!" with such heartiness that all the fellows asked:

"Who is coming?"

"My people," replied Bob, with an expansive smile.

"Look here, Adair," said the would-be wit who was recovering from Bob's first answer, "don't stretch that mouth of yours any farther, or your ears will have to be moved back."

"All right," answered Bob; "I'll lend them to you then. Yours are not long enough for *pons asinorum*, I believe."

A thrust which set the rest into fits of laughter; for the blunder Brintnall had made trying to cross that celebrated mathematical bridge was a standing joke in the class.

"Come along, Steady!" said Bob, taking his arm; and he walked off, volubly unfolding his plans.

"We'll meet them," he went on, "at the evening train."

"Would you not rather go alone, Robert?" said his companion, with some diffidence.

"No, you old goose, I wouldn't," answered Bob. "So now don't go putting on airs; for when I ask you to come, I *want* you."

The next evening found the two at the depot, eager-eyed and excited, keeping their place in the throng, shoulder to shoulder, unmoved by the rush of the vans, undisturbed by the endless shout of "Gangway, there!"

As the train drew up, a little, fair-haired

lady, with large blue eyes and fair, clear skin, came out of the car, followed by a tall girl, with keen gray eyes, high features, and a profusion of red-brown hair. Bob made one spring, caught the little lady in his arms, and, fairly lifting her down, kissed her with a vim that set her bonnet crooked, and made him unconscious, for the moment, of anything else. Meanwhile Robertin (to his own intense astonishment) offered his hand to her companion, helped her down, awkwardly took her hand-bag, and then stood, with head uncovered, in a great state of confusion as to what to do next.

Bob wheeled around on them.

"Oh, you dear old chap!" he said to the girl; "how glad I am to see you!" And he threw his arms about her, and kissed her, first on one cheek, then on the other.

"Bear!" she said, giving him a little push, and looking at him affectionately; "do you think I'm made of steel springs, that you crush me so?"

But he only grinned cheerfully, gave her

a pat on the shoulder, and, waving his hand toward Robertin, said:

"Mother, Aunt Nell, this is old Steady, sometimes called Robertin, and the best old chap in the world."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Adair, with a sweet, cordial smile; and, putting her little hand into the great one offered her: "I am so glad to know you! And I want to thank you for being so good to my boy."

"Good to Robert—*I*, Madam? Why it's —it's all on the other tack," answered Robertin, in great surprise.

"Bob tells a different story," said his aunt; "so you will have to submit to being thanked."

Then they hurried up to the hotel, where they spent a half hour, happy to Bob, but stranger to Robertin than anything he had ever known; for he had never seen anything like the loving familiarity of this son to his mother, her quick response to his every thought, her sympathy, and her dainty grace; he had never in his somber young

life heard such cheerful nonsense and light laughter as were bandied between Bob and his aunt; and when they rose to go his eyes grew soft, and a strange knot came into his throat, to see the mother reach up to her tall son, and kiss him tenderly, and to hear her say, as she signed his forehead with the Holy Sign: "Good-night, my darling! God bless you!"

"*Ce gars là est bienheureux!*" he thought; and then, "it is Robert, and I rejoice for him!" And this brought such a smile to his lips, and such a light to his eyes, that Bob's mother said to herself: "What a splendid face!" Then, as she turned to him, with her soft grace of movement, she said aloud:

"You must come to see us as often as you can; for any friend of my boy's is welcome, but *you* are doubly so."

Then both boys left at a double-quick, to be in time for tattoo. As they darted round corners, and bolted through the needle-like alleys that pierce the houses in the quaint old town, Bob gasped out:

"She's going to be Dalrymple's godmother."

The next morning they were excused as soon as possible, and hurried off to the hotel. They found the two ladies bonneted and cloaked, and ready to start out at once. Mrs. Adair's first wish was to see the quarters where Bob lived, but he said:

"Now, mother, let's begin at the beginning, and go regularly through; for I want you to see *everything*; and yet you must not tire yourself, you know."

She smiled in the cheeriest way, and replied:

"Very well, my dear; I'm in your hands, and at your disposal."

But Bob's aunt said:

"Oh! *she*'ll do anything you ask, but *I* want a distinct understanding on certain points before we start. Where are we going?"

"All over the place," said Bob, lucidly.

"Of course, but *where?* For, mind you, Bob, while I am very fond of you" (here

Bob clapped his hand on his heart, and made her a sweeping bow), "and would do a good deal for you, I will not be trailed up sky-scrapers, and spanker booms, and bowsprits, and—and—things."

"All right, my dear," he chuckled.

"And," she went on, solemnly, "I will not be asked questions about knots, and splices, and jib-stays, and be expected to admire dolphin-strikers, and scuttle-butts, and running bowlines. You see," she said, complacently, "I have been reading your dear Marryatt and Cooper, so I would not feel quite like an idiot down here. I can't say that it has helped me much either," she added, *sotto voce.*

"Well, I should say so," said Bob; and he put his head back, and laughed until the quiet street echoed, and even Robertin's mouth twitched at her display of seamanship (?).

When he recovered a little, he said:

"I am sorry about the knots though, for Matthew Walker's grandfather—"

"O Bob! if he's a friend of yours, my dear, I'll look at anything rather than disappoint you, or hurt the old man's feelings," she interrupted, hastily.

At this Bob fairly fell against a neighboring tree-box, and wiped the tears from his eyes.

"Goodness, boy!" she said, briskly, "what is the matter? What have I said?" she added, turning to Robertin.

"It's a knot, Madame—Madamoiselle," stammered Robertin. "There are three of them—Matthew Walker, Matthew Walker's Grandfather, and Double Matthew Walker. And Robert made you one of the grandfather's—the best in the class—and he got permission to keep it for you, instead of having it put in the seamanship building. He made you a grommet-strap, too," he added, embarrassed by his long speech.

Bob's aunt laughed, then she shook her finger at her graceless nephew, and said:

"Just wait, young man, till I get a chance at those ears! They shall be trimmed with pink and lined with tingles."

By this time he had recovered sufficiently to move on; and as they entered the gate, the smart marine saluted a very dignified Mr. Adair indeed.

V.

WITHIN the iron bars of the gate the little party stood a moment for the view. Before them lay a level reach of still green turf, studded with sturdy oaks, and dotted here and there with shrubbery. The plain shaft of the Herndon Monument rose immediately in front; Blake Row stretched to the right; the "new quarters" lay to the left; and far off, between the vistas of other buildings and trees, gleamed the bay, with its flying sails and screaming gulls.

"Smell the salt!" said Bob, sniffing with keen enjoyment the breeze that swept in toward them, laden with the sweet, faint tang of the sea. "Better than violets, sweeter than roses, dearer than—"

They all laughed at his sentimentality, but Bob appeared not to notice this. "Let's go to the Tripoli Monument first," said he;

"and then we can take a squint at the jolly old cannon—Caroluses, and Mexican, and French. They are beauties!" And a few paces brought them to the plat where they were ranged.

They were of bronze, green with age, and carved in the most elaborate manner. The breeches of several were wrought in the form of lions' heads, tigers' heads, and grotesque masks, whose tongues served as cascabels, and whose flying manes trailed off, and were lost in the scroll-work around the names. And such names!—*Le Gaillard*, *Le Grondeur*, *Le Mordicant*, Mars, the Kisser, Menelaus, *Le Moniteur*, *Le Fier*, *Le Grand*, the Swearer; and one of the Spanish guns bore the name of the Prince of Peace Himself; while a "family party" of Caroluses (Bob's designation, of course) completed the group.

Between them and the building, fair and white, was the monument erected to those who fell in Tripoli during the stirring days when Decatur, Stewart, Bainbridge, Porter,

Barron, Hull, and Rodgers were making their fame in the far-off Mediterranean, while the young Republic at home was learning to stand alone. On the square base were blazoned in gold letters the names of Somers, Caldwell, Decatur, Wadsworth, Dorsey, and Israel (the order in which they yielded up their lives). Above, on a smaller square, tinted and veined with palest amber and rose-pink, were the bas-reliefs of the fatal fights in which the young heroes fell, and the mourning but exultant tribute of their bereft country. A frieze of Saracens' heads banded it, and surmounting it were the figures of Fame, History, America, and a group of children, to whom the Future shows the tablet-stone.

It stood on a slight eminence, and about it sprung shrubbery, bare now in the December cold, but suggestive of luxuriance when Spring should revivify the earth.

As they looked at it in silence, Bob said, with a voice grown a trifle husky:

"It's the first thing we see in the morn-

ing; and as it rises out of the darkness in Winter, or shines in the sun in Summer, I tell you it's just like a sort of immortality; and it sets your heart to burning, and makes your breath come short. *They died like men!*"

And the two lads, with a common impulse, whipped off their caps, and stood uncovered.

Bob's mother put a trembling hand on her son's arm, and said:

"Thank God for peace, that leaves me and all other mothers our boys!"

But his aunt, with something suspiciously moist in her keen gray eyes, exclaimed:

"Poor fellows! Well, that's the easy, glorious side of duty—to be cut down in the middle of victory, with the world hurrahing. But remember, Bob, 'they also serve who only stand and wait.'"

"Yes," said Bob, with a quick, impatient sigh; "but gunpowder is so—stimulating!"

Then they examined the monument carefully, Bob rattling off incidents and data that showed he had studied the subject thor-

oughly; while Robertin added a quiet word now and then, his great eyes shining.

They entered the "new building" (still so called, although nearly twenty years old), and Bob showed his mother the "details" —the lists of what classes and what middies were told off for duty, and the various duties.* The summing up gave a busy day.

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* GENERAL ORDER No. 16.

Until further orders the following routine shall be observed:

Morning gun-fire and reveille	6.00
Call for morning roll-call	6.45
Morning roll-call	6.50
Breakfast immediately after roll-call.	
Prayers	
Sick-call	7.30
Call to rooms, and 1st forenoon recitation (1st period)	7.55
March to recitation	8.00
Call to 2d forenoon recitation	9.00
March to recitation	9.05
Recall from 1st period recitations	10.10
Call to 3d forenoon recitation (2d period)	10.20
March to 3d " "	10.25
Call to 4th " "	11.25
March to 4th " "	11.30
Recall from 2d period recitations, and release from rooms	12.35
Call for dinner formation	12.55
Dinner	1.00
Call to rooms, and 1st afternoon recitation (3d period)	1.50
March to recitation	1.55
Call to 2d afternoon recitation	2.50

"But, my dear boy," said his aunt, turning wide eyes on him, after reading these long lists, "you don't do *all* that, do you?"

"Well, not all at once," replied Bob, with a cheerful grin.

March to recitation	2.55
Recall from 3d period recitations, and release from rooms	3.55
Call to afternoon exercises and drill	4.05
Second call to afternoon exercises and drill	5.25
Recall from " " " "	6.00
Call to dress parade (when ordered)	5.50
Call to evening roll-call	6.25
Evening roll-call	6.30
Supper immediately after roll-call.	
Call to rooms	7.25
Evening gun-fire, tattoo, and release from rooms	9.30
Warning roll	9.55
Taps	10.00
SATURDAYS.	
Morning gun-fire and reveille	6.00
Call for morning roll-call	6.45
Morning roll-call	6.50
Breakfast immediately after roll-call.	
Prayers	
Sick-call	7.30
Call to rooms, and 1st forenoon recitation (1st period)	7.55
March to recitation	8.00
Call to 2d forenoon recitation	9.00
March to recitation	9.05
Recall from 1st period recitations	10.10
Call to exercises and drills	10.20
Recall from " " "	12.30
Call for dinner formation	12.55
Dinner	1.00
Call for evening roll-call	6.25

"I'm glad to hear it," she continued, dryly; "for I was afraid we'd have an infant phenomenon or a marine prodigy on our hands."

Evening roll-call	6.30
Supper immediately after roll-call.	
Evening gun-fire and tattoo	9.30
Warning roll	9.55
Taps	10.00
Taps on Hop nights, 20 minutes after close of Hop.	

SUNDAYS.

Morning gun-fire and reveille	6.00
Call for morning roll-call	6.45
Morning roll-call	6.50
Breakfast immediately after roll-call.	
Sick-call	7.30
Call for inspection 1st Sunday of month	9.40
" " " other Sundays of month	9.55
Inspection 1st Sunday of month	9.45
" other Sundays of month	10.00
Church parties for 10.30 a. m. services in Annapolis, form at	10.15
Call for services in Chapel	10.20
March to Chapel	10.25
Church parties for 11 a. m. services in Annapolis, form at	10.45
Call for dinner formation	12.55
Dinner	1.00
Call for evening roll-call	6.25
Evening roll-call	6.30
Supper immediately after roll-call.	
Call to rooms	7.25
Evening gun-fire, tattoo, and release from rooms	9.30
Warning roll	9.55
Taps	10.00

Cadets not on duty or at recitation must be in their rooms within five minutes from the call to rooms.

"Yes'm," said Bob, with a meekness not in the least deceptive. "But we have enough; our course is Algebra, Geometry—and that means indeterminate co-efficients,

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Sections shall be mustered immediately after the order "Silence," and shall be marched to the recitation rooms in columns of twos, and in quick time.

Sections must be promptly dismissed when the bugle sounds the call to march to recitation.

The call for morning and evening roll-calls, for dinner formations, and inspections, will be sounded at the lower quarters five minutes earlier than herein specified.

When the call shall be sounded for any exercise, drill, or formation, the cadets shall assemble rapidly at the place where such exercise, drill, or formation is to take place; and shall go at once to their stations, to their parts of the ship, to their guns, get in their launches or boats, or take their places in ranks, as may be required, without waiting for further orders.

The order "Silence" will be given, at the number of minutes after the roll-call indicated below, for

Seamanship exercise on board the *Dale*, or in boats to go to the *Dale*	7
Monitor exercise (Phlox's wharf), or in boats to go to Monitor	7
Tug exercise	7
Steam Launch, or boat exercise	7
Great gun exercise on board *Santee*	9
Howitzer exercise (Armory)	7
Infantry	7
Naval Brigade exercise (Armory)	7
Fencing (Gymnasium)	7
Boxing "	7
Gymnastics "	7
Roll-call at upper quarters	4
Section formations	3

General Order No. 6, and all Orders or Regulations that conflict with the foregoing, are hereby annulled.

permutations, logarithms, mensuration of rectilinear figures, and so forth—English, Ancient History, Rhetoric, Modern History, Geography, and French and Spanish. Then we have drills aboard ship and ashore; marline-spike seamanship, lead and line, ropes, compass, and the rigging-loft. Next year it will be all that, and Physics, Descriptive Geometry, and Trigonometry; Mechanical Drawing, cutting and fitting rigging (wire and hemp); rigging and stripping ship; making up, bending, unbending, and handling sail; and sailmaking besides. The *next* year—but I'll belay."

"My dear," said his mother, "why should you, who are an officer, have to learn all this manual work? You surely are never obliged to do it at sea."

"No, ma'am," replied Bob; "but you see we've got to know how it ought to be done, and just how long it ought to take to do it. You know, mother," he continued, earnestly, "a slouchy piece of work, such as a bad bit of rigging, might endanger the life of a ship

and its whole crew. Don't you remember that story of the careless carpenter who put in the side of a vessel a piece of timber that had a worm-hole in it, because he was too lazy to get another one, and how the worm gnawed away, and weakened the plank, until once, in a gale, the vessel sprang a leak, and all hands were lost? Well, that's the principle."

"And, Madame," said Robertin, "would wonder at the knots Robert can make already."

"Yes; Matthew Walker's gr——" began Bob, mischievously.

"No more of that, Bob!" said his aunt, with dignity. "But," she added, with animation, "I *do* want to see old Haxall!"

"Well, now, you *are* a daisy!" exclaimed Bob, sincerely gratified. "He's a regular old brick!"

"O Bob, such slang!"

"Not *this* time," he answered; "that's classical. It was a Spartan gen-e-ral," he began, in a sing-song tone; "and when the

hostile am-bassa-dor visited his country, and asked, 'Where are your walls, that you defy us so proudly?' he answered, pointing to his soldiers drawn up in a line: 'These are my walls, and every man is a brick.' Now, what do you think of that, ma'am?"

"That you are a bigger goose than ever!"

Then they went into the mess-hall, where the white-jacketed waiters were flying about, their arms filled with glass and china, and their jolly black faces beaming.

Bob explained to his mother how each crew had a table to itself; how the captain of that crew, being a senior classman, gave an eye to the deportment of his youngsters, and preserved a wholesome discipline, without checking the fun or comfort. And he called her special attention to the tables themselves, draped with nice linen, set with good china, glass, and silver; and read her the bill of fare, which, comprising as it did a soup, roast, four vegetables, a salad, and dessert, was appetizing. Then he showed her the great block-tin cylinders, in which

the tea, coffee, and cocoa for breakfast and supper were made, and kept "piping" during meals; and the carving-tables, dished at short intervals, and zinc-covered, with a steam coil under them, and capacious gravy "gutters"; for it is a fixed principle at the Naval Academy that not only shall the midshipmen be served abundantly, but that whatever they get shall be hot and appetizing. He also pointed out with pride the rifle-scores made and the race-trophies carried off by the various crews (during the half-term), which decorated the walls and stanchions; and, finally, as they turned to leave the building, he got one of the waiters to bring him the breakfast and supper *menu*, which he handed his aunt.

Then he led them through the winding paths, past the great bronze bell (cast and carved in Japan, and sent home by Perry as a token of good-will); past the monument "raised by midshipmen"—the stone says—to Pillsbury, Clemson, Hynson, and Gleason (other midshipmen, who fell long years ago

at Vera Cruz); past the band-stand, with the shining water always before them, until they turned to the left, and entered on another phase of their sight-seeing.

VI.

THAT certainly was a busy day for Bob, and his tongue rattled so fast that his aunt pretended to be seriously alarmed for the safety of his hinge-pins. In her heart she rejoiced in the boy's delight, and was really surprised at the amount of information he had already gathered about his profession and his surroundings.

"And as she gazed, the wonder grew";

for when they went into the old gunnery (now the headquarters of the Naval Institute), he had something to tell of every flag and every object of interest there displayed.

"See here, Aunt Nell," he said, "this great chap is the royal standard captured at York.* This fellow's the ensign of the *Peacock*, and this"—with kindling eyes—

* Now Toronto.

"is Perry's own. See, aunt—look!" and he pointed to the great white letters, "Don't give up the ship!" that sprawled over its surface. "You know those were Lawrence's last words. He sang 'em out when he was dying, aboard the *Chesapeake*. And, then, wasn't it just a burning shame that those beastly Lascars struck, and ran below, almost without a show of fighting? The Americans in the crew didn't have a fair chance; for before the ship sailed, they changed the drummer for a bugler; and he was a darky, and got so scared when the *Shannon* and *Chesapeake* fouled, that when Lawrence ordered the boarders called away, he couldn't make a sound, and they had to be scrambled together the best way they could. You know in those days they kept the boarding-arms around the mast—"

"Boarders?" said his aunt, in a puzzled way. "Did they take passengers about in war-ships in those days?"

Bob stared at her a minute.

"Gracious, no! Boarders are the chaps

told off to make a dash onto the enemy's deck when two ships grapple. On land," he added, in a lofty, explanatory way, as if he were then afloat, and never expected to raise a coast-line again, "you'd call it a 'charge.'"

"Where is Lawrence buried, Bob?" asked his aunt, wishing to make amends for her blunder. "Here?"

"No," said Bob, his face falling. "He's buried in Halifax. It's a disgrace out and out; for even if he *was* dead when the white flag was run up, and hadn't any say, I don't think his country ought to let his dust lie there in a foreign soil. He isn't all alone, though, for his men are at his feet— But I don't like to think about it. This"— he turned to the flags again— "is the Corean Royal Standard our fellows captured at Sun-tol-mok in '70. Isn't that a bird of dragon, though? And those black spots are Hugh McKee's blood. He was killed just near it, and was covered with it. I wrote you about it. Those things like

feather dusters are Corean, too; and all these"—with a sweep that included a large number of banners, ensigns, and gridirons —"were captured during the war of 1812. This was—"

"Adair!" called a gentle voice just then, and a little figure appeared in the doorway. "Oh, I beg pardon, I'm sure! I did not know any one was with you."

"That you, Dalrymple? The very chap I wanted. Come here, and be introduced to my people."

And Bob drew him forward, and in a few minutes he was looking with pleased confidence into Mrs. Adair's face, and showing his pretty dimples at the chaff that always flew when Bob and his aunt were together.

VII.

"Look here, Steady," said Bob, after a long yarn about the *Hornet* and the *Frolic*, so crammed with technicalities that his aunt clasped her head distractedly, and shut her eyes, "I don't believe this dear old chap cares a rapp for sea-fights, so take her over yonder and show her the cannon and flint-locks."

"What is there special to see about them?" she asked.

"They are Cortez cannon, Ma'm'selle," answered Robertin; "and the special thing is they are breech-loaders. You know," he added, seeing that she still looked at him expectantly, "we thought breech-loaders were new inventions, but these three-hundred-year-old cannon say not. And here's another thing about them: the touch-hole is *under* the breech; so the fire did not spirt

up in the faces of the gunners, as it does in ours."

"I think it is all frightful!" she exclaimed—"I mean all these fire-arms. It's awful to think that men should use the minds God gave them to invent means of murdering each other!"

"Perhaps, Ma'm'selle, the war-engines will become so terrible that nations will not go for each other as carelessly as before," he said, quietly.

"Perhaps," and she stared at him reflectively. "That's a new idea to me." Then she asked: "Do you believe in fighting?"

"For a principle, yes, to the death!" he answered, with emphasis.

Then Bob bustled up joyously with his mother and Dal, and they went into the seamanship building, where, he remarked, his foot was on his native heath, though Macgregor *didn't* happen to be his name.

The first object that engaged their attention was the working model of the *Antietam;* and, with its towering masts, tracery

of ropes, delicate spars, and perfect sails, it was worth looking at. The next thing was the array of ropes, splicings, etc., with which the walls were covered. There were specimens of wire rope, hide rope, tarred rope, silk and linen rope, and every kind of hemp that is used in rigging the navies of the world. And the knots and splicings—oh, dear! Their names were painted in bold white letters, "so he who runs may read," quoted Bob, with his best air.

"Oh, no, my dear!" groaned his aunt; "you mean, so he who reads may run. Who ever heard of such things?" and she read: "'Sheep-shank, jar-knot, French and American shroud-knots, diamond on six strands, wall and crown, grommet and selvagee straps, three-strand Turk's-head, rose on six strands, paunch mat, breeches mat, Matthew Walker —"

At this Bob looked down with the deepest interest at his neat Oxford ties, which kept his eyes out of mischief; but his lips twitched, and she added, abruptly:

"Here, boy, take me away! I feel a strong symptom of imbecility creeping over me."

"Well, here's the very thing to restore composure to your nerves, ma'am," he said, pointing with a flourish to the hideous lion that once guarded the deck of the old *Macedonian.*

"Very pretty," she remarked, sarcastically. "Looks as if he'd been put up in curl-papers, and hadn't got over the kinks yet."

But to the relics of the *Cumberland*, the *Florida*, the *Pennsylvania*, and the figure-head of the *Old Constitution* she paid the tribute of silent respect, and found herself really interested in the models of every craft afloat—from the flying proa of the South Seas and the Chinese junk, to the 74-line-of-battle and the monitor — which adorned the walls of the gallery.

As they made their round, Bob put his head into a side room, and there was Haxall "swabbing down decks" (mopping the floor, in other words).

"Here's luck!" he exclaimed, and told his mother who it was. She looked with interest, and, as the old fellow glanced up and saw Bob, such a brightness came into his face that she stepped forward, and said:

"I am sure you are Haxall! My son has told me about you."

"Has he now, marm?" replied Haxall, pulling his hat off with one hand, and drawing the back of the other across his mouth to hide the huge grin of satisfaction that stretched it. "I'm proud, indeed, marm, to see ye; an' I kin jes tell ye one thing, ye ain't got no cause whatsomdever to worrit a grain about that there young gen'leman (he told me wunst ye was sot agin his comin' inter the sarvice); he's got the makin' of a prime sailor, an' a fustrate off'cer; and he's as clean and white a little man as ever stepped. So don't ye fret, marm."

And then, somewhat alarmed at having said so much to that "purty chaney doll of a lady," he raised his hand to his forehead in salute, and "made a leg" (a sailor's bow)

that was more respectful than graceful. But as the party turned away he asked, in a troubled voice:

"Why, Mr. Adair, ye ain't never goin' 'thout showin' the ladies them thar Trafalgar pictures?"

"That's so, Haxall!" replied Bob, and straightway led them to the awful (artistically) but interesting old paintings.

Then they went to Stribling Row to see the quarters of the two Roberts, and from there to the docks, where the practice ships, prison ships, launches, balsas, and catamarans were anchored and moored.

"See that catamaran," said Bob, after he had told in glowing terms the history of each ship—"that black one, bobbing up and down there? Well, that's the sort of thing Lucien Young rode ashore on when the *Huron* was wrecked off the Carolina coast."

"Wouldn't a boat have been better, my son?" asked his mother, looking with horror at the seemingly flimsy thing.

"I don't think so, dearest," he said.

"You know she"—the *Huron*—"grounded on the shoals four hundred yards out, and the waves made a clean breach over her. The first ones smashed the boats on the weather-side, killed the captain, and washed off the executive and a lot of the deck watch; and everything on the lee-side was so awfully mixed up that the men who tried to launch the boats were knocked away, and either killed or drowned. The sea was a smother of breakers, and the sailors and the rigging were going every minute. Besides, I don't believe a boat could have lived—"

"O Bob! why didn't they swim for the shore? Four hundred yards isn't very far," interrupted his aunt, quite pale with the awful story.

"Well, my dear," said Bob, "you never saw a storm on the coast, but you can easily believe that swimming through waves as high as the cross-trees yonder, and being hauled under and beaten with the breakers, would make four-hundred yards seem an *eternal* distance. Besides, pretty nearly

everybody thought landward was seaward, and such as could swim went the wrong way, and were soon drowned,—Lord have mercy on their souls!"

After a pause he resumed his narrative:

"Young stayed aboard, trying to get the bearings, and hanging to anything he could lay hands on, until a spar fell on him, and caught him across the legs, and mashed him down, with his head in the piece of sail that it had fetched away with it. Then he *was* in a fix; for every time the poor old *Huron* gave a roll—and that was pretty often, as she took the ground broadside on—his head would go under, and the sail didn't drain off quick, and he was almost smothered, besides being nearly broken in two by the spar. But he wriggled loose somehow, and made shift to cut adrift the catamaran; and he and two sailors got on it, and put out for the shore, paddling, hanging on, and choking, till they felt the sand grind under them. Then Young dragged himself on those banged up legs ever so far

—four miles, I think—to the Life-Saving Station, broke it open (it wasn't the season for a crew to be there), and took what things he could; when he got back, the wreck was empty, and the dead sailors lay in rows on the sand. And those wreckers —those wreckers!"—and his boyish face took on a look so stern, so full of white wrath, that his little audience of four watched him spell-bound—"they say those men saw the rockets sent up by the *Huron;* that they saw the blue lights burned while she lay rolling in the jaws of death; that they made no effort to get out the life-boats, and that they pushed the sailors (who struggled through the surf) back into the water to drown, so that they could rob them of their money-belts and clothes.

"I hope to God," he added earnestly, "it isn't true; for—"

But just then across the water flew the strong, sweet notes of the bugle calling them to formation; and the three lads hauled off their hats, made their best bows and raced

as hard as they could for the rapidly forming line, leaving Mrs. Adair and her sister to make their way back along the pleasant walks to the gate, where Bob met them (having been excused from supper), and took them to the hotel.

VIII.

The next day a light snow-fall made the walking vile, and filled the air with dampness; but Bob and Robertin took the two ladies around by the fish-market, through a "cut" more short than savory, and in at the gate of the Navy Yard, near the chapel. A few steps thence led them to the library, which is one of the most fascinating places on the grounds.

It was formerly the residence of the Colonial Governor, and its rooms were left unchanged, as to size and shape, by the authorities of the Academy; but they filled them with books (technical and otherwise), with busts, portraits, paintings, and relics; all bearing on the one object of the institution—honoring the memory of the nation's great naval dead, and stimulating the students to serve their country with like devotion, and equal credit to their cloth.

Bob pointed out with much *gusto* the four views of the battle between the *Constitution* and the *Guerrière*, the first of which represents the two ships in the pride of swelling sail and perfect hull; the others, in the various stages of mutilation that befell, until the English wreck was surrendered to the American wreck. And how the boy did talk! He had the naval history at the end of his tongue, and, having a lenient audience, rattled away to his heart's content.

The portraits of the Fathers of the American Navy were also objects of absorbing interest to him.

"See, mother, what a beauty Decatur is; and Stewart too! *He's* 'Old Ironsides'—Parnell's grandfather, you know. I think they have the most perfect faces I ever saw. This is Barney, of the *Hyder Ali*,—don't you remember? And here's Hull. He's not quite such a good-looking chap; but he isn't bad. Look at the cut of his jib—his nose, I mean. Doesn't it set up at a most defiant angle? He's the one that outsailed

and out-maneuvered the English squadron under Broke, in 1812. There never was such a piece of seamanship since the world began. He fell in with them five days out from the harbor here. There were the *Shannon*"—checking them off on his fingers —"the *Guerrière*, the *Africa*, the *Belvidera*, the *Æolus*, and the prize *Nautilus;* and the whole kit of them made all the sail they could during the evening and night of the 17th of July, and closed in on the *Constitution.* The actual chase began at five o'clock on the morning of the 18th, and the English ships had more wind than we had; so Hull had all the rope that could be found payed down into the cutters, bent on, a kedge run out half a mile ahead, and let go. Then the crew just clapped on, and walked away with the ship, overrunning and tripping the kedge as she came up with the end of the line.

"The boats were so evenly ahead of the ship that they couldn't be seen by the Englishmen, and she just quietly 'progressed' away from them before they caught on to

the scheme. Then came the tussle; for the enemy held on like bull-dogs, and were clever enough and quick enough to follow up trick for trick. And the *Shannon* put out *her* men, and towed and kedged too; while the *Guerrière* swelled round, watching her chance to close.

"After a while we got a little wind, and sailed a bit; then it failed, and we towed and kedged again. Then Hull had a lot of water started to 'lighten ship,' for it's no joke to tow along a man-of-war under a July sun.

"Every now and then a shot plumped alongside, and by and by we began answering with a long eighteen, and with two twenty-four pounders that were run out of the cabin windows. But these twenty-fours had to be stopped off; for the transoms had so much rake, and the windows were so high, and the guns so short, that every time they were fired the explosion humped-up the upper deck, and almost shook the stern-frame out of place. Then came some more

towing and kedging, with little cat's-paws of wind to whip along in between; and when the *third* day came the chase was still on.

"It must have been beautiful!"—with enthusiasm—"the still sea, the blue aloft and alow, the five frigates just a cloud of canvas from truck to water, and the other six vessels dotted around—ten flying the English flag, one the American. And, mother, I do think one of the finest things Hull did was when a twelfth sail came fluttering up; as it rose, he saw it was an American merchantman, and beset as he was he hoisted an English ensign to warn it off; for the other chaps had run up the stars and stripes as a decoy, and it would have been a regular 'walk-into-my-parlor-said-the-spider-to-the-fly' business, if the little Yankee had come bumping into the tea-party—gunpowder-tea party. Ha-ha!

"Well, at seven o'clock that last evening a great squall came tearing along, and Hull had everything kept fast till just before the wind struck the ship. *Then* he ordered,

'Clew up and clew down!' The light canvas was furled, a second reef taken in the mizzen-topsail, and she was under short sail in a jiffy. As soon as she got the weight of the blow, she sheeted home, hoisted fore and main topgallant sails; and while the Englishmen thought she was steering free before the wind, she was flying away from them at the rate of eleven knots an hour.

"The next morning the wind fell light, but Hull had the sails wet down from the sky-sails to the courses, so they drew for all they were worth; the squadron was widely scattered by the blow, and at a quarter past eight the chase was off. Come, look at his medal."

And Bob showed the case of superb medals, struck off after each great victory, and awarded by Congress to the heroes of 1812. Their busts were in relief on the obverse sides, and on the reverse were, finely engraved, the scenes of their triumphs, with sonorous Latin lines of praise, and citation of the deeds commemorated.

After this outburst the boy called their attention to the portraits of the superintendents of the Academy, Buchanan being the first on the list.

"He commanded the *Merrimack* at Hampton Roads, mother; and wasn't it the 'fortune of war,' sure enough, when he went sailing against Captain Smith's ship (Father Jerome's Captain Joe, you know)! For Captain Joe had been a midshipman here under Buchanan, and had made his first cruise in the *Merrimack*. He was very clever in gunnery, and took special interest in it on that cruise; and it must have been one of those very guns that he had handled and commanded that killed him, and set the *Congress* afire.

Dr. Shippen* says when the *Merrimack* (or, as the 'Johnnies' called her, the *Virginia*) ranged alongside, Buchanan sang out:

"'Smith, will you surrender?'

* Surgeon U. S. N., to whose devoted courage Captain Smith's family owed the recovery of his body from the burning vessel.

"And he answered: 'No!—not while I have a gun left, or a man to work her.' *

"And, mother dearest, the first time I go up to Washington I wish you'd give me a letter of introduction to his sister; for they say she's got a first-rate portrait of Captain Joe, and his sword. This sword was given back to her father, the Admiral, † by Captain Tatnall, of the *Merrimack*, for they were old friends; and he [Tatnall] said: 'Death bridges political differences,'—the old brick!

"And here's a bust you must both see. He isn't ours, 'except by right of purchase,' like the old General's ancestors in the 'Pirates of Penzance.'"

"Who is he?" asked Bob's aunt, looking with close attention at the splendid, rugged countenance, with its masterful brow and sensitive mouth.

* These words are historical.

† This officer rendered signal and distinguished service to the Union cause. His advocacy of iron ships was largely instrumental to their successful adoption; and I have been informed by an ex-Confederate officer that the *New Ironsides* (built by his advice, named by him for Commodore Stewart, and famous about Hilton Head) was the terror of the Confederacy.

"Look at his empty sleeve, Ma'm'selle," said Robertin.

"That doesn't help me," she answered, with a brilliant smile; "there are so many empty sleeves since the war."

"It's the Nelson of Trafalgar."

"And the greatest man that ever lived, I suppose you two think?" she remarked.

"I think he was great, Ma'm'selle, certainly," said Robertin, thoughtfully. "He was not a good sailor—"

"What is that!" she asked, surprised, while Bob gasped.

"Why, Steady, what under the sun—"

"No, Robert,—not a good sailor, personally; for he didn't bother much over ropes and spars, trimming sail, and all that, but left it to his sub-officers, while he worked out the way to handle fleets. That was his *métier;* he felt the importance of that, and he was a very great fleet-commander. It was that which won Trafalgar to England."

Then, embarrassed by such a long speech, Robertin stopped abruptly, and, by way of

changing the subject, called attention to the view from the Annex window.

The Annex is the modern addition to the library—a beautiful building, finished within and without in pressed brick; the girders, rafters, ceiling, and trimmings being of an oak so rich and golden in color as to look like sunshine. Its walls are lined with valuable books; a wide oaken table runs down its center, and finely-carved oaken chairs, upholstered in stamped leather, are ranged about it. A great window "gives" on the Severn, and looks like a splendid picture hung on the wall.

After they had enjoyed the shifting scene for a while, Bob's mother said:

"Come, dear, let us go now and see if our flowers have come from Baltimore; and then let us have an early dinner, so we can go to confession before dark."

For it was Christmas Eve, and the dear little lady had ordered a hamper of bloom for the altar, next day.

The afternoon was spent in quiet and

devout preparation for the great event of Christmas; for Father Grotius had decided to give Dalrymple conditional baptism, as it was impossible to ascertain whether any member of the stricken, agonized household had thought of baptizing the child while the young mother, so beloved, so lovely, lay dying; and it was certainly not done afterward.

In the morning (for our boys had a "special permit" to leave the Navy Yard at 4.30 a. m.), while the stars and frost made the darkness glorious, they joined the throng that pressed with hurrying feet toward St. Mary's, for the first Mass.

The church is a fine specimen of the Gothic, and in its Christmas garb was radiant. Some of the Catholic sailors had asked and obtained permission to decorate it, and the marvelous festoons of crowfoot and evergreen that seemed to float in mid-air,— the crosses, stars, and garlands, were a testimony of their skill and piety. The main altar was a pyramid of light, and the flow-

ers Mrs. Adair had sent filled the air with a sweetness as penetrating as the odor of the incense.

The two Roberts, and Bob's mother and aunt, received Holy Communion, and to Dalrymple came the great Sacrament of Regeneration. The boy was in such an exalted state, and his soul shone so clearly from his great eyes, that Mrs. Adair fairly started as she looked at him; and her heart yearned over the young mother who had died so untimely a death, even as she bowed in tearful gratitude to the Mother of mothers for the white soul now born to the Church.

The little fellow was dressed in his parade uniform, with his tiny dirk belted at his waist, and his side-arms polished to the last point of brightness. It was an idea of his own; for when Bob suggested his "full dress" uniform, or his "fatigue-uniform," he had said, seriously:

"No, Adair; for I would never want to wear the 'dress' to a hop or ball after being baptized in it; and I wouldn't want to lazy

round in the 'fatigue' if I wore *that;* but as it is a sort of enlistment into ranks, where I *do* want to do my duty, why I'll just wear the clothes I have on when I receive and obey the orders that are making an officer of me. See?"

And Bob, with a quaintly tender look in his merry face, had answered:

"All right, chappie!"

As the sun rose, they went back to the hotel, and Mrs. Adair had breakfast served in her parlor. To each of the boys she gave an appropriate and handsome gift, and was both surprised and touched to receive from her godson and Robertin *souvenirs* of the day. The first was a great knot of Parma violets, and the other a small ebony crucifix,—the figure of metal, and black with age. As Robertin gave it, he said:

"It is believed to have belonged to Père Marquette himself. That he blessed it is certain, and my mother venerated it highly."

"But I must not take so valuable a relic from you," answered Mrs. Adair.

"I beg you will, Madame; it will be best, too. For the holy relic might get mislaid or lost, in spite of care. You know I shall be here to-day and anywhere to-morrow, when once I am at sea. Besides," he added, with intense earnestness, "I should like *you* to have it,—you are Robert's mother."

And again she saw that softening of his face, that lighting up of his eyes, that proved how dear Bob was to him.

"Well," as Bob remarked, "that *was* a day,"—one of the happiest imaginable; and next morning the best of the holiday was over, for the two ladies went away, and in a few days the boys buckled down to hard work, which was not remitted until the June examinations were over, the practice-ships fitted out for a cruise, the anchors weighed, and the white-winged hulls dropping down the Bay as fast as they could drive.

Ah, that cruise! Its first days were like a living poem to Bob (after he got over his sea-sickness), but in the third week came a stunning shock.

IX.

THERE was a brisk, dry northeaster blowing, and the waves ran in sapphire hills crested with pearl; and as the spray flew in the air, the sun filled it with flashing bits of rainbow hues.

The middies were aloft, hard at work taking in sail. Suddenly the vessel gave an uncommonly heavy lurch, and Bob heard a faint cry at his side. He was bending over the yard with his hands full of sail, and tugging away like a good fellow. (For a handful of canvas, with a spanking breeze stiffening it, is about as easy to reef as a board.) He glanced up quickly, and saw Dalrymple falling into the water. His heart stood still a moment, then he sprang after him, shouting as he went, "Man overboard!"

They struck the water almost together,

but while Bob rose like a cork, and puffing like a young grampus, Dal rosè slowly, and labored heavily. The waves that from the ship's sides looked so gently rolling, now seemed awfully high above them; and the white-caps slapped their faces and blinded their eyes.

As Bob struck out, he kept saying, over and over again, "Our Lady of Mount Carmel, save us!" and when he reached Dal, and seized him under the arm with one hand, he opened his mouth for a good hurrah; but a white-cap popped into it, making him sputter and choke; and Dal's white face lay so close to the water that his joy was short-lived.

Meantime the ship was hove to, and all was alertness and action. The boats were "let go," manned, and shoved off; two buoys were cut loose and thrown out; and the surgeon had hot blankets and stiff grog prepared for the boys; but even while Bob's shout vibrated in the air, and before an order could be given, help was on its way.

Bob and Dal were in the foretop, Robertin in the mizzen; but the latter constantly kept his eyes on the two boys, and was never comfortable about them when there was any sea on. This day he was especially uneasy, and several times, as he watched Bob's nimble heels, he muttered:

"*Ce gars-là, est trop hardi!*"

As the ship lurched, his eyes and hands were fully occupied for a few minutes; then he looked forward, and—Bob's foot-rope dangled empty! At this sight Robertin straightened himself on his precarious foot-hold, and swept his hawk-eyes around in one keen glance (the fellow next him said he became so white he thought he was going to faint); and the great beads stood out on his forehead, although the wind was fresh and keen. Then came Bob's cry, and Robertin gathered himself together, watched his chance as the ship rolled, and jumped.

"Great Heavens!" said the startled officer of the deck; "is the whole Academy going overboard?"

As Robertin rose from his plunge, he uttered a cry so piercing, so full of agony, that it made itself heard above the creaking of the blocks, the wash of the sea, and the whipping of the sails.

"*Tiens, gars, moi je viens à toi!*" and he seemed literally to tear his way through the water. He was not very far from the boys, for the motion of the ship had covered more than the distance between the masts; but he reached them in fewer minutes than seemed possible.

He had caught up a buoy as he swam, and he and Bob, by treading water, made shift to get it on Dal, who lay limp and unconscious across their arms. Then Robertin turned to Bob, with a great sob in his throat:

"Robert, I thought I had lost thee," and in his keen dark eyes the tears rose. But as he swung up on the crest of a wave, he smiled brightly, and sang out: "Cheer up, *gars!* the boat is near."

And it was, but the time seemed terribly

long, and Bob grew almost as pale as Dal. Seeing this, Robertin called out to him, sharply:

"Float!"—adding, as Bob hesitated to loosen his hold on Dal, "it is the best chance for all of us."

Then the great fellow managed to keep Dal's head up, while he hovered near Bob, full of anxiety for that bright boyish face; and he had never heard such sweet music in his life as the "rick-rack, rick-rack" of the oars in the thole-pins, and the ringing cheer of the crew as the boat swept down on them, and a dozen hands were stretched out to haul them inboard.

As it happened, Bob was the nearest, but he told them to take Dal first; then he and Robertin almost had a fight as to which should be helped in last. They were tumbled in between the thwarts, and covered with jackets during the short pull to the ship, and were received with the greatest enthusiasm,—an enthusiasm tempered, however, by Dal's continued unconsciousness.

They were hurried to the sick-bay, and the surgeon found the poor little chap's collar-bone and two of his ribs broken, and his body badly bruised; for he had fallen partly on his side, and the wonder was that he had not been killed outright.

"A plucky little beggar, to swim at all!" said the doctor; and, turning to Bob: "Beyond doubt, you saved his life, Adair. It will be a nice item in the report of the cruise. Eh?"

Bob's ready color showed even through his pallor.

"I didn't any more than Steady, sir,—not as much; for he saved us both."

To which Steady responded by a brisk "*Taise toi, p'tit choux!*" For under strong excitement he always relapsed into his French, and often his idioms.

"But, doctor," he added, with a loving glance at the *p'tit choux* that belied his sharp tongue, "look at this boy, and see if he is hurt in any way."

"Of course I'm not," said Bob; "and how about you?"

"Oh, I'm all right," he answered, indifferently, and shrugging his shoulders; "I'll go shift into dry clothes, and return to my work."

And he did, to the great delight of his classmates, who, however, found him very unresponsive to everything except praise of Bob and sympathy for Dal.

The first free moment he had he went below to see Bob. The latter was lying with his eyes closed, but opened them immediately on Robertin's approach.

"Steady," said he, "you saved my life. What shall I say to you?"

"Nothing, Robert, only thank God and Our Blessed Lady. Ah!" he added with a shudder, "when I saw your place empty I thought my heart would burst; and as I swam for you, the water felt just like lead, and I could hardly make headway. And all the time I prayed, not"—he remarked, with a gesture of humility—"as I should have done, but with a fierce challenge to God. I said: 'Thou wert an only Son. Thou *must*

save him for the sake of Thy Mother!' and to her I cried: 'You dare not let him perish—for the love of your Son.' God forgive me!"

And for the second time that day (and in his life) the tears stood in his eyes. Then he added, softly:

"And I think He has forgiven me, for I have you safe. And she—ah! she is so gentle and loving! I will serve her better the rest of my life."

Poor Bob, quite overcome by this outburst, hardly knew what to answer; but, with the impulse of a grateful and affectionate heart, he threw his arms about Robertin, as he bent over him, and gave him a hug that certainly entitled him to the name of Bruin Minor. Then I think the two boys would have cried in a minute, but Robertin kissed Bob, and that youngster broke into a merry laugh.

"My eye, Steady!" said he; "don't let the fellows get wind of this, or we'll be chaffed out of our lives."

"Perhaps," said Robertin, sinking back into his usual gravity, half ashamed of his emotion, although still shaken by it.

"And now," said Bob, as Robertin sat by him, their hands fast locked, "as soon as ever we get to Funchal we will go to Holy Communion in thanksgiving; for, after all, it *was* a mighty narrow *squeak*."

And it certainly was; for the ship was running free, the sea was brisk, the fall high, and the two lads first in were inexperienced swimmers.

That night Bob tossed and turned for hours before he fell asleep, and even when he did it was a fitful and uneasy rest, haunted by suffocating dreams of the day's adventure. Once, as he awakened with a start, he saw Dal sitting on the side of his berth. A shaft of moonlight came in at the port, and fell athwart his slight figure. His bare feet were on the ground, and he bent forward, with his hand on his breast, breathing heavily.

"Why, laddie," said Bob, "do you want

anything? You should have called me. You mustn't stir."

"Oh! please, Adair, I'm almost smothered."

Bob was up in an instant. He opened the port wide, caught up a towel, twisted it into a fan, and began fanning him.

"Here, lean on me," he said; and, putting his arm round the sound side, he gently drew the boy toward him; but Dal gave a choking, gasping cough, and from his mouth the blood and froth came pouring.

Bob was terrified, but he kept him well up, and gave a shrill whistle, knowing that would carry as far as a call, and would attract attention without rousing up everybody; besides, it wouldn't jar Dal so much as the effort of shouting.

A marine instantly appeared, and Bob told him to call the doctor, and report to the watch officer that Cadet Midshipman Dalrymple had a bad hemorrhage.

The doctor came hurrying in, in undress, and found Dal lying across Bob's knee, white and unconscious.

"I didn't know what to do, sir," said Bob, anxiously. "He was such an awful color I thought I'd better lay him down right here, for I didn't dare lift him into his bunk."

"Right," said the doctor, mechanically; "when a fainting person's face is white, lay him down; when it is red, keep his head well up." Then he muttered, as he gently moved Dal, "This is just what I was afraid of; his lung is pierced, and his effort to sit up has done the business."

"Will he die, sir?" asked Bob, in an awestruck whisper.

"I hope not, of course," said the doctor; but he looked so anxious, and was so long about his preparations and instructions for the rest of the night, and gave his assistant such special charge to call him up in an hour, that Bob's heart sank. He had learned to love Dal dearly, and to think of his dying was a hard blow.

The next few days confirmed the doctor's fears. Hemorrhage followed hemorrhage,

and just as the peak of Ariero rose sharp and clear against the sky, it was evident to everyone that the child was sinking. His courage and endurance were amazing, and, although every breath was agony, no complaints escaped his lips, only his great, sad eyes implored relief, and his one expressed longing was for the Sacraments before he died.

His favorite nurses were Robertin and Bob, who spent all their spare time with him. He asked for Peyton several times, but he came only once; for he could not bear the sight of pain, and hated to think of solemn things. Of course he was sorry for "the poor little beggar," but he could do him no good, he said, and there wasn't any use in being miserable when one couldn't help things.

On that last evening of his life Dal lay in Robertin's arms, his head pillowed on his broad breast; Bob sat at his feet, with blanched face, and his teeth set in the effort to repress his grief.

The captain, the surgeon, and the captain

of Dal's watch stood near, with uncovered heads. As the light slipped down the west, the dying boy opened his eyes and whispered:

"Captain—"

"Aye, my lad," said he, stepping forward.

"Write, please, sir."

"What shall I write?"

"My will."

And the captain, who was a man of few words and many deeds, pulled out his notebook and stylographic, and wrote:

"To Robertin I leave $5,000; to Adair, my library and pictures; to Father Grotius, $10,000, and—"

He stopped, panting heavily.

Robertin and Bob, greatly startled, said: "Let it go"; but he nodded faintly, and added:

"The rest—yes, my guardian can attend to that." And with his failing strength he signed his name: "Mary Van Alstine Dalrymple."

Then he looked up with a shadow of his

old smile, and the ghosts of his pretty dimples appeared for a moment in his cheeks.

"I love you two—Mother Mary's boys." Then, "Lift me up, Steady, and say—say—"

"*Domine Deus?*" asked Robertin.

The dying boy nodded, and when the beautiful prayer of poor Queen Mary in prison was ended, he sighed rather than said, "Now—" but his voice failed.

"The *Memorare*, Steady," said Bob, with a sharp sob; and Robertin began.

"Is it wise to excite him so by praying, and—er—that?" asked the captain, uneasily.

"Well, I do not know," said the doctor, thoughtfully. "These Catholics are such queer fish, it seems to *settle* rather than upset them."

Dal's fingers pulled feebly at his neck.

"Oppressed, my boy?" asked the doctor.

He faintly shook his head, but smiled as Bob gently but quickly drew out the little pearl rosary-string he wore about his neck, and put it in his frail hands.

"Begin—quick!" he gasped.

And Robertin, holding before him the crucifix he always wore, began the Rosary.

His deep, quiet voice rose on the stillness like a tide of peace, and the dying child's eyes grew larger and brighter. In the midst of the decade of the Nativity he suddenly joined in the responses, and his voice, so long sunk to a whisper, was clear and loud as he said:

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death—"

Then the red torrent rushed from his lips, and Dal's clean white soul was with God.

Outside, the song of the sailors rose full and strong as they let the anchor go, and the ship swung round to her berth. The full moon floated like a pale reflection of the setting sun, and by the dead boy knelt the two Roberts—Bob, with the tears blinding his sight; Robertin, with his mouth stern-set, and the veins in his forehead standing out like a whip-cord; but the hearts and voices of both rose in the *De profundis.*

X.

THERE was a great military funeral, and for a few days the middies spoke often of their little shipmate, and moralized, in their boyish fashion, about life and death; but after that Dal was put aside, except by the few who had known and loved him best; —not forgotten, but "put aside"; for in the Army and Navy, the "Dead past buries its dead."

And this is the reason that, when the last three volleys are fired over the grave, and the sleeper is left in

> "The low, green tent, whose curtain never outward swings,"

the funeral train (which has marched with reversed arms and solemn tread to the sombre, thrilling music of the Dead March) wheels about, and steps out homeward to the gayest strains the band can play. Or,

if the burial be at sea, when the dead man is sewed in his hammock and launched into the deep, the gratings are unlashed and replaced, and all hands are piped to some duty For the life and spirit of the living must be kept healthy, and free from morbidness; and grief unhinges a man's nerves sorely.

Bob and Robertin held the dead boy's memory tenderly and tenaciously, and as they knelt to receive their Communion of thanksgiving in the Mount Church their hearts were full as they recalled that last Sunday at St. Mary's, when they had all approached the Holy Table together, little dreaming that Dal was receiving his Viaticum. But, like the healthy, hearty boys they were, they set about making the most of their shore-leave, and after they had breakfasted at a queer little *café* they hired two mules and started to see the island.

The peak of Ariero was their objective point, but their progress was at first slow; for they stopped every few minutes to enjoy

the strange and beautiful view. The mountains stretched in a line not unlike a great natural amphitheater, broken here and there by brawling torrents and deep ravines and chasms. The basalt cropped through the luxuriance of tree and flower in fantastic peaks and turrets, or else descended boldly in great sheets and walls to the sea. The red tufa added its basic tint to the dark grays, reds, cream-whites, and browns; and as the light shifted and changed in the growing day, the sea, sky, and shore took on wonderful colors, in the midst of which Ariero rose like a pyramid of flowers to the cloud-line; and indeed it thrusts its cap so far into the upper air that aquatic plants are often found growing thereon. The Mount Church stood out on its rock-bracket, like a pious hand holding the crucifix to the world of stone and water; and flumes and rifts in the mountain sides disclosed glimpses of a beautiful country beyond.

A soft wind blew from the sea, and the "jocund day" crept into the bones of our

boys and their long-eared, short-legged steeds. They felt distinctly festive, and began to mend their pace so effectually that, as Bob said, they were soon "scudding under bare poles." Of course they rode like sailors—that is, frantically—wherever their mules took them, and they had a glorious time. It went to Bob's heart to crush the heliotropes, the lilies, and the great, glowing geraniums, that made a fragrant tangle everywhere; but Robertin sensibly remarked:

"They are the wood-carpet here, Robert, —the weeds—and where you crush them new ones spring; for they are hardy—*ces fleurettes.*"

"That's so, old Steady," answered Bob; "and as I am neither a sea-gull nor a dear little fairy I reckon they'll have to go smash. But don't they just smell, though! It's like having a bouquet tied to your nose."

And it was, with the addition that through it all ran the keen perfume of the sea.

They spent a glorious hour on the mountain top. How the sun did shine, how the lizards darted about, resplendent in color, and the rabbits scudded by with startled eyes and vibrant ears! And how the gulls and sail-boats wheeled and dipped in the two blue arches that girt the island.

But the afternoon was creeping on, and they had to think of getting down. Slowly they dragged themselves from the fragrant herbs and flowers, from the beautiful rice-grass, and lingeringly looked their good-bye to the scene; and, as they looked, Bob sighed:

"Poor little Dal!"

"*Mon ami*," said Robertin, his hand on Bob's knee, "he's in a far lovelier land. God made this—yes, and it is fair to see—but the other *is* God." And he raised his cap reverently for an instant. Then he added, with his grave, sweet smile: "I have often thought that the Star shone on the dear little lad Christmas morning."

"What do you mean, old man?"

"We have a legend that whoever goes to the first Mass of Christmas with a sinless heart and pure mind, will catch the light of Bethlehem's Star. And it will make him blessed, and if he begs any special favor of God he will receive it, if it be for God's honor and glory."

"Well, but that's pretty! Where do you pick up such a lot of things, Steady?"

"Oh!" said Robertin, confused as always when attention was attracted to himself, "I could hardly say. Look, Robert, isn't that a farm-house?"

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Bob; "it is, and I'm as hungry as a kite! Let's prick along, and get some bread and milk."

And off he clattered like a young whirlwind, with Robertin after him.

They found the farmer's wife was a rosy Irish girl, who had come out as nurse to an English officer's child; but the child died, and she married one of the melancholy, dark-eyed peasants of the country, who go about looking like the chorus of an Italian

opera, and have the manners of Spanish princes.

When our boys politely made their request, little knowing that milk was one of the luxuries of the island, she hospitably bustled about, saying:

"Indade ye shall have bread and milk, an' somethin' stayin' besides; for it isn't me Pa-dro and me that's goin' to let ye go by hungry. An' is it Americans ye are? Well, glory be to God! it's meself has a brother in that same place. Dennis McCarthy is his name, an' it's the prosp'rous man he is by this. He wint to Pittsburg, where he's blowin' the lungs of him to tatthers in a glass factory; but he gets the wages, though! And—aha, here's me Pa-dro a-comin' now!"

And she called out (perhaps not sorry to show off her Portuguese) to the tall figure that approached, toiling along under a heavy load of straw.* His wide white cottonade trousers looked spotless in the distance; his shirt was open at the throat, showing

* In Madeira the harvests are sown in October and reaped in June.

a bronzed, hardy breast and throat, on which hung a great silver medal of Our Lady; and his long blue cap and short blue jacket contrasted well with the yellow rye-stalks.

He saluted the boys with much natural dignity, and made them a little speech (which his wife translated), to the effect that he laid himself at their feet, and his house was theirs, and all it contained. Then, under kindly compulsion, they sat down to a capital meal of what tasted like venison, but was wild goat; *aqua pé*,* a sort of *polenta* made of chestnuts, an abundance of rye-bread, and a glass of milk apiece.

When they were ready to go, Mrs. Pedro quite declined to take anything in payment; so when her back was turned they slipped a gold piece under the jug of *aqua pé*, and went out to mount their mules, pretty stiff, it must be confessed, from their morning ride.

As they were tightening up the girths, Pedro spoke a few words to his wife, where-

* A thin, light drink, made from the crushed stems and pulp of the grapes from the wine-presses.

upon she slapped him on the shoulder with an "Och, but your're the boy! He says" —turning to Bob and Robertin—"mebbe instead o' ridin' down, ye'd like to slide down on a sled."

"Come now, Mrs. Pedro," said Bob, "are you not ashamed to try and play a trick on two poor little midshipmen?"

"It ain't a joke at all at all," she laughed, "but a rale plan. The hills are too steep for wagons, an' we slide manny a thing down on the sleds."

"What do they go on?"

"Sure on their own wooden runs, wid grease rubbed in to kape 'em from stickin'."

"Why, that would be immense!" said Bob, with dancing eyes; and even Robertin looked excited. "But the mules?" he added; "I'm afraid we can't leave them."

"An' ye shan't," she answered; "I'll ride 'em down meself, an' Pedro an' me can haul the sled up."

And in a few minutes they were dashing down the mountain side at a rate that took

their breath, and made Pedro's blue cap stand up straight. A sudden stop jolted them off in a heap; but Pedro, his dignity unruffled by standing on his head (although so much can not be said of his clothing and hair), turned the sled up, greased the runners carefully and amply, and off they streaked again.

At the bottom of the slide, after thanking Pedro heartily, and vainly urging some small change on him, they watched with some anxiety Mrs. Pedro and the mules as they came down the almost sheer slope; but the wise little creatures neither stumbled nor balked, and the Irish girl held on tight, so the boys were soon trotting off for the harbor, full of their day's adventure.

Another day was spent in the Coural—the sheepfold—an immense valley near the village of Comera de Lobos, which is walled in by almost perpendicular hills a thousand feet high; another in the vineyards, and rabbit shooting; and then it was up anchor, and off for home.

At the Academy they found several telegrams from Mr. O——, Dal's guardian, requesting, if possible, their immediate presence in New York. "It just fitted," as Bob said; for he and Robertin had a few days' leave, and his mother and aunt wanted to stop on their way from the mountains, to do their fall shopping. So the boys packed their "kits," had their papers made out, and started.

Mr. O—— met them at the depot, and rattled them off to the Union League, where they lunched. He thanked them earnestly for coming, and said he had asked it of them because they had known Dal so well, "better," he added remorsefully, "than I did, and can advise me what to do about certain things.

"You see," he said, "he has left everything so entirely to me that I feel doubly anxious to do the square thing by him. Now, there are a lot of diamonds that belonged to his mother. What had I better do with them?"

"Perhaps," replied Bob, hesitatingly, "he would have liked your wife and daughters to have them."

"No; I don't think so,"—decisively,— "for he never saw them but once in his life. Isn't there some use they could be put to in your church?"

"Yes, sir; no end of uses."

"Well, for instance, now. You know there is no need to sell them to raise money; for he left a tidy lot of that, which I mean to divide between the orphan asylums and Brace's Home for Destitute Children."

"In that case, then, sir, I'd suggest that the gold should be made into a chalice, and the stones set in it. You know, believing as we do in the Real Presence, we think there is nothing too beautiful or too valuable for the altar. Then the chalice could be given to some church or chapel. Eh, Steady?"

"As a perpetual memorial of the little one? Yes, Robert. And if—"

"Go ahead."

"If there is not enough gold," said Robertin, directing his level gaze at Mr. O——, "I should like to add it from what he gave me."

"And I," said Bob.

"No, boys," answered Mr. O——, "that will be my part. Don't grudge it, for it's precious little. Ah!" he added, with a melancholy look in his fine face, "that religion of yours is a great thing, Some day, when I have time—when I have time—"

Just then the clocks chimed eleven, and, recalled to the race for gold, he excused himself hastily, invited them to dinner, and rushed off to the Exchange; for he had dipped heavily into wheat, and was then overdue in the ring where the "bulls" and "bears" fight for the upper hand.

The chalice was soon completed. It was as gorgeous in chasing and carving as Tiffany could make it, and was fairly crusted with splendid gems. It was given, by the wish of the boys, to St. Mary's of the Sea—a little chapel they found while hunting out

Lieut. Berry's school ship, the *St. Mary's*—a quaint structure, around whose weather-beaten eaves the sea-winds piped and shrilled, and on whose altar Mass was daily said for sailor-men living and dead, and to whose congregation Father Moriarty often told the story of the little lad who bore the name of Our Lady, and who died in his baptismal innocence.

XI.

THE new academic year brought new duties, new scenes, new friends, and some new complications. For instance, as Bob went to boat-drill one afternoon, he came on an unexpected group. Two of the Japanese stood leaning against the railing near the carpenter's shop, looking sullen and half-frightened; while Saito, his usually pleasant face distorted with anger, was threading his way, in his stocking-feet, in and out, around and between his *shoes*, which were set about a foot apart on the walk.

As he went, he kept his eyes steadily fixed on his two countrymen, and muttered or chanted words in his native tongue. At certain points of the recitative his anger seemed to half suffocate him, and then, with

a look of elfish malice, he would spit at his shoes and to the four cardinal points.

"My eye!" said Bob, "what in the mischief—"

"Ah!" said Saito, slowly and solemnly, "bear witness, Adair. I have cursed them by the 'twelve signs'—their comings and their goings. I have set a mark upon the North, the South, the East, and the West. I wish they may die away from home, and lie far from the bones of their fathers."

"Why, Mick," (they called him the Mikado, and this was the friendly shortening up of it,) "what in the world have they been doing?"

"Doing! They have insulted me."

"But look here, old boy, it's perfectly awful to wish things like that to fellows!"

"Don't you get mad ever, eh?" asked Saito.

"Yes, I'm sorry to say I do—tearing mad sometimes."

"Well, then don't you want fellows killed?"

"No," said Bob, roundly.

"Why?" asked Saito, in surprise.

"Why!" echoed Bob; "why, what would be the use of it?"

"Vengeance!" said the Jap, with gleaming eyes, his long, yellow fingers contracting nervously.

"But that's heathenish, Mick, and you are a Christian."

"Well?"

"Well, Our Lord died to bring peace and good-will."

"But," said Saito, naïvely, "that was so long ago!"

"His death, yes; but His law is alive, all the same. Like your Fusiyama, don't you know? Men come and men go, but 'the mountain' stays."

"Ha!" said the Jap, with a quick, pleased smile. "But why *you* feel so? Lots of fellows don't."

"Because that's what the Church teaches, and if you're a Catholic you've got to mind."

"Cath'lic? What's that?"

"Anybody that belongs to the Church—the Church Our Lord established," said Bob, feeling the subject too vast to enter upon there or then; for the bugler was mounting the steps, and if he wasn't in his seat, with his hand on his oar, when his name was called, *somebody* would know the reason why. So he turned to go, adding:

"Come now, Mick, uncurse those chaps, and let them alone. It's bad for your health, my boy, to get mad in this climate—makes you bilious, and spoils your appetite."

And he smiled his brightest at the glowering little heathen.

"No, I will not—uncurse, do you say?" asked Saito, with a glare at the offenders; "but to please you"—and he bowed like a grandee—"I will let them go."

And he slipped into his shoes, and walked after Bob, his minute figure stiff as a ramrod, and with dignity enough, as the latter afterward told Robertin, "for a pasha of nine tails—pigtails, I mean."

But, although he laughed over it in some of its aspects, the scene as a whole weighed on him, and he and Robertin managed, in one way or another, after this, to see a good deal of the Mikado, and to draw him into the circle of their intimates, which circle included a lot of not only the jolliest, cleverest fellows in the Academy, but nearly all the oddities as well. "A regular hennie-pennie and turkie-lurkie crowd," Bob called it sometimes in confidence to Robertin, and in joking allusion to the old nursery story. And certainly the boy, with his bright temperament, his honest soul, his clean mind, and his physical perfections, did attract to himself not only kindred spirits, but the weak, the queer, the sad, and the shy; for they always felt sure of sympathy and patience, at least,—two qualities as needful as courage and strength, if one wants to serve his fellow-men.

A few days after "the incantation scene," Robertin distinguished himself in a way that filled his class with pride at his

"savey," set the Academy in a roar, and forced the upper classmen to the conclusion that Bruin Major was "up to a trick or two worth knowing."

The practice of hazing, which had been pretty successfully kept under during the year the two Roberts were "plebes," broke out with fresh force in this their third class-year. Among the first classmen was a notorious "hazer"—a ridiculous little creature, who looked like a canary-bird, and put on airs enough for "a shipload of admirals" (Bob's comparison, of course).

He came down to the *Phlox's* wharf one afternoon, where Robertin and a group of classmates were waiting for Bob. They had a "permit" to go sailing in a "bug-eye" —a craft peculiar to the Chesapeake—and three or four of them were baling the boat, examining the ropes, wetting down the sails (for the wind was light), etc.; but Robertin was standing, craning his neck for the first glimpse of Bob.

Up stepped the "Peacock" (his name

was really Babcock, but the change was irresistible), and, in his piping treble, sang out: "I wish you to go in swimming Mr. Robertin."

"Thank you Mr. Babcock, I have no desire to go in swimming. A previous engagement."

"But, Mr. Robertin," he squeaked, "I *order* you to go in swimming."

This was conclusive, for he was Robertin's superior officer.

Bruin Major glanced down at his uniform.

"Strip off your coat, your trousers, and vest, Mr. Robertin," ordered the Peacock; "and take a header off the wharf."

Robertin looked very glum, but suddenly his eyes twinkled, and the fellow nearest him said afterward he saw his mouth twitch. In the mean time a crowd of first and second classmen gathered, chuckling over the fun.

Robertin slowly "peeled," the Peacock standing near to see his orders faithfully executed.

"That's it!" he said, approvingly. "Now

the header, if you please." (Verbal politeness was his great *forte.*)

"Aye, aye!" answered Robertin. "Come along!"

And before the dismayed and routed Peacock could utter a word, he caught him in his arms, and plunged into sixty feet of water with him. Down he went like an otter; then, rising slowly, swam a few yards; dived again, and swam under water; rose again and struck out for the shore, where he hoisted the Peacock—such a draggled, dismal peacock!—choking and subdued, to the wharf, shook himself into a McIntosh Bob had rushed after, and slid into the back-door of his quarters to shift into dry clothes.

But as he went, Babcock sang out, fairly dancing with rage: "How dared you, sir! —how *dared* you!"

"Dared!" said Robertin over his shoulder, in mock surprise; "why, you didn't say anything about *not* wanting to go."

XII.

But things were not always harmonious; the boys had their ups and downs, and blows and throws; and sometimes tempers were "absent without leave," and the mischief was to pay generally.

Take that day in the gymnasium, when Peyton was holding forth to a lot of the fellows on the necessity of "lying like a gentleman, when honor demanded." A group of his friends and followers listened in respectful silence, until one boy—a simple, straightforward Westerner—spoke up:

"But, Peyton, *can* a man be a gentleman and a man of honor if he lies? The chaplain said last Sunday—"

"Oh, bother the chaplain! He's an old duffer anyway, and religion's all—"

"Hallo, you fellows! What's up?" exclaimed Bob, whirling over and over on a

trapeze, and landing at their feet in a cloud of tan-dust.

They explained, and Bob clapped Clausmeyer on the shoulder with a "Right you are, my boy! And the chaplain's head is level."

But Peyton said: "You don't understand, Adair. Suppose a man's honor is at stake—"

"Now, see here, Jimmie" (they called him Jimmie, Bob used to explain, because his name was Dacre), "save your breath to pray for your soul, old man; for a lie is a lie any way you fix it; and the Commandments distinctly—"

"Oh, pshaw! If you go in for that sort of cant—"

"Cant!" exclaimed Bob.

"Well, then, superannuated superstition" (Peyton was fond of big words), "if you like that better."

"I don't," said Bob, bluntly. "And, apart from the question of religion (*that's* the word for it), to tell the truth is good, hard-pan common sense. For if you tell a

lie you not only have a nasty blot on your conscience, but you get tripped up sooner or later every time, and then where are you?"

"Look here, Adair, you'll find that sort of thing won't go down when you get out in the world of men. By Jove,"—showing his white teeth,—"wouldn't it be a nice mull if a fellow had to tell the truth—the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—every time? No, no, my boy; too inconvenient!"

"Not as inconvenient as losing your soul."

"Losing your— Bless me, you don't believe in that?"

"Well, rather," said Bob.

"Why, Adair, you are centuries behind the times."

"About eighteen — yes," replied Bob, dryly.

"Well, that's not a half bad answer," said Peyton, somewhat amused; "and, since your chin wags so freely, just tell me what's the use of religion anyway? It keeps you

out of pretty much everything, especially making money; and the 'mighty dollar' is a big factor, you know. Religion does well enough for women and children, but for men—pshaw, it puts a bit and snaffle on you at every turn; and *I* believe in 'Eat, drink, and be merry.'"

"'For to-morrow we die,'" finished Bob. "And then?"

"Then the deluge," said Peyton, shrugging his shoulders. "This life is good enough for me. What do you think about it, Saito?" And he turned to the little Japanese, who stood listening, his black, bead-like eyes twinkling shrewdly.

"Short. Hard. Soon old, sick, die. Better to have something afterward to pay up."

"Oh!" said Peyton, "are you going to be one of the moral preachers and teachers, too?" (He was fast growing angry.)

"What's that—preacher, teacher?" asked Saito.

"Why, a snuffling young saint, like Adair there,"—with an unlovely sneer.

"Adair all right," said the Jap. "You all funny fellows. One believe one thing, one another, next man something else; and all talk, talk,—talk much, get mad. Adair there, and him, and him, and him" (indicating with his forefinger Robertin, O'Donovan, Blake, and two or three Catholics), "all think same, say same, and don't get mad." *

When Peyton last spoke, a hot answer had rushed to Bob's lips, but, true to a childish habit he still retained, he bit his lip and whispered a "Hail Mary." Then he turned to Peyton and quietly said:

"Don't talk stuff, Jimmie. You know and I know that I'm not much of a hand at an argument. But there's just this to it: if you'll go to any place, among any people, and find a lot of infidels who are just as good, out and out, as the same number of those who believe in God and keep His Commandments, why, then we can begin to talk about it on an even tack."

* This was noted and commented on in nearly these words by an amiable Eastern pagan of my acquaintance.

"Well," said Peyton, — he was really ashamed of his outbreak, — "all I have to say is, you'll never get on in society if you stick to those ultra views. Mark my words."

"Did Our Lord die that we might 'get on in society'?" Robertin asked, in his quietest voice.

"Bah!" said Peyton, "there's no use talking to *you*. You are such a confounded papist—"

"Hold hard, there, Peyton!" put in Bob; "don't call names. We are both *Catholics*, and proud of it." And he squared round to Robertin's side.

"How in the dickens does it happen that a fellow like you *is* one?" asked Peyton, irritably. "I thought only ignorant chaps like—"

He stopped abruptly, but his look at Robertin completed the sentence.

"Like me?" said the latter, tranquilly. "No. Read Father Zahm's lecture on 'What the Church has done for Science,' and you'll see that the greatest minds of the world belong—"

"Oh, stow it!" interrupted Peyton, peremptorily.

"What?" asked Robertin, with an ominous gleam in his eyes, and nervously handling the Indian club he had been swinging.

"Drop it!" exclaimed Peyton (meaning the subject).

"Assuredly," said Robertin. And he let the heavy wood fall on Peyton's foot, eliciting a howl from that young gentleman.

Wrong? Of course, but so natural that Bob hardly knew how to comfort Robertin's passionate regret.

"O Robert!" he groaned, as they walked up to their room, "it is just such beginnings that make bad endings, with tempers like mine. And, then, what a way to end a talk about our Faith!"

Poor Peyton! A few months later some twenty or thirty fellows were involved in a "whiskey-ring." Two bottles were smuggled in, a gathering held after hours, the rules broken; and when the officer-of-the-

day got wind of it, and pounced down on the crowd, Peyton was recognized, and, in the court of inquiry that followed, was summoned to testify. Instead of acknowledging that he knew who the ringleaders were, but felt obliged to be silent, Dacre Peyton, although on oath, "lied like a gentleman" at the demand of a false sense of honor, was caught in the lie, and dismissed. And so the service lost a junior officer who was meant by God and nature to be an ornament to it.

Given: Bad moral training, lack of religious teaching, indifferent home example, and perhaps unfortunate early associations, and what a deplorable result! A career spoiled, a young life "scratched" at the very start in the great race, a blight put upon a name, and a fine nature debased to the poor uses of the world and the flesh.

Bob was deeply distressed, and pondered seriously on a sentence in one of Father Jerome's letters:

"My boy, in the log-book of your con-

science, enter lying—that sin against the Holy Ghost—as one of the worst of the sunken reefs in life's sea. Steer clear of it; give it a wide, wide berth."

XIII.

THE second class-year ran its course smoothly, the only break being the "Shavers' Rebellion," which, however, ended peacefully, evaporating in a huge laugh before any damage was done, and chiefly through Bob's instrumentality.

The commandant had a perfect passion for uniformity (one Academy wag declared it was the sorrow of his life that he couldn't regulate the sun to rise and set at the same hour Summer and Winter); and one afternoon, when he had a bad attack of his mania, he happened to look down the parade-line at the moment the adjutant was reading the orders of the day. The result was a sudden conclusion that the appearance of the corps was ruined by the diversity of full beard, no beard, "straggles," mustaches, imperials, and "mutton-chops" that

adorned the faces of the members; and next morning an order was issued that on and after the 10th inst. the cadet-midshipmen should appear clean-shaven.

Well, there certainly was a row! Chins wagged at the rate of a mile a minute, and you couldn't hear yourself think for the racket. Everybody talked at once, and you would have thought that at least liberty and life were at stake.

The first classmen felt it most keenly; and Paxton, whose tawny mustache was the joy of his life, asked, in bitterness of spirit: "What are we going to do about it? We've wasted enough breath to sail a frigate. Let's belay now, and act."

"I move for a deputation," said Hilton, whose father was a Congressman, and who doted on committees, motions, and parliamentary phrases; and who couldn't "go" to save his life, but must always "adjourn."

"Well, what then?"

"Go to the old man and ask him to reconsider—"

"Haw!" snorted Benton, a gigantic Kentuckian, bearded like a pard; "I'd like to hear you suggesting such a thing to him!"

"What are *you* going to do about it, Blue Grass?" they asked, eagerly; for he would be the heaviest sufferer.

"Shave. And so are you!"—laconically.

"No, sir!" said the Peacock, who came up just then. (He had been turned back a year for "hazing," and was still in the Academy.) "No, sir. I do not consider that any man has a right to order my personal appearance. Let him regulate my comings and goings—yes, sir; but when it comes to my beard—"

"Hear! hear!" cried the others.

"Your *what?*" asked Bob, ranging alongside, with twinkling eyes; for he had long felt he owed the Peacock one for the trick he had played on Robertin, and here was his chance.

"My beard, I said, Mr. Ah—Adair,"—in a very-slightly-acquainted tone.

"My conscience!" exclaimed Bob, "you

don't call that a beard!" pointing to the straggling down on his cheek. "Well, that certainly *is* giving an ''airy nothing a local habitation and a name.'"

The shot told, and a howl went up that broke the Rebellion's back; for, although there was much growling and more heartfelt regret, the "'airy nothing" was too much.

The first class-year followed swiftly, and then, as Bob said, it was "pull for the shore sure enough"; for the standard had been raised, the recitations lengthened, and a set of enthusiasts put at the heads of the various departments; but he threw himself heart and soul into the tussle, working his way up steadily among the "stars," * and having three stripes and a double diamond to show for his pains. Robertin followed in his wake; and although he did not win

* The first five men in the class. The "Adjutant" of the corps is the one who stands No. 1 in everything, and one of the insignia of his rank is the cluster of four stripes of gold lace on the sleeves of his uniform. The "three-stripers" come next, the two-stripers next, and then the one-stripers, and the "double" and "single diamond" men,—all of whom are chosen for some specially officer-like qualification, and whose commands range from a company to a gun's crew.

a star-ship, he too carried his gold lace and had his command, and he and Bob were known as the hardest readers in their "crowd."

When the second term began, their difficulties increased; for Gunnery and Astronomy got them in their terrible grip, and "ground them exceeding fine." After the first week Bob declared he felt "like Mr. Dolls, the one that ''ad the 'orrors,' you know. For these chaps"—slapping his Mackinlay, Briger, and Sarraud—"are the toughest lot I ever struck. I'll warrant 'em to kill at sixty paces any day."

To which Steady responded by a dismal shake of the head, and expressed his belief that they weren't "a patch on White, Chauvet, and Bowditch; while for this"—his great palm on American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac—"I have no words."

And it was about this time that the great trial of Bob's life began to germinate,—a trial that wrenched his nature to its foundations, and tore to shreds Robertin's calm-

ness, threatening with destruction the result of years of earnest effort and religious training.

There was a fellow in the class named Amherst,—a young man of plausible address and pleasant manners, and who was far from ill-favored; but his gray eyes had a trick of flickering and slipping away from a direct gaze, and he was almost too anxious to agree with every statement advanced by those with whom he talked. He was intimate with a rather turbulent set of fellows, but always spoke so regretfully of their fast ways, and urged their fine traits with such apparent good-feeling, that he got the general reputation of letting his heart run away with his head, and of sticking to his friends to his own disadvantage. There were some, however, who declared he was "as deep in the mud as they in the mire," and called him a sneak, and various other names more forcible than polite.

He was rather an odd "lot," too—very nervous at recitations, especially Gunnery,

and his antics both amused and annoyed his classmates. Robertin's attention was early attracted to this peculiarity, as the fellow sat, first running his fore finger round the inside of his collar, then pulling at his cuffs, then twisting a scrap of paper in his hands.

The first time he did this last the instructor called to him sharply: "Mr. Amherst, you will please hand me that paper."

He started, but walked forward promptly with it. The officer took it, examined it, and glanced keenly at Amherst, as he stood before him with downcast eyes.

"Return to your seat, sir," he said, with a baffled look; and Amherst bowed and walked off, but not before Robertin caught a malicious gleam in his eyes, and a fleeting smile on his thin lips, that set him wondering. However, he rebuked himself sharply as uncharitable, and wrongly suspicious; for, of all academic vices, "gouging" * is the most despised and most severely punished.

* "Cribbing,"—writing "gags" on cuffs, handkerchief, or slips of paper, to aid in recitation.

But the seed was sown, and Robertin caught himself watching the fellow again and again.

The "nervous habit," as Amherst called it whenever spoken to about it, was generally disapproved of, and he seemed to make a genuine effort to overcome it, succeeding at times; but Robertin noticed that when he was most nervous he made the best recitations, and, in spite of himself, he had strange thoughts.

Another thing. Toward the close of the year Bob got permission for special study, so as to prepare himself better for the examination in this branch; and many a night he and Robertin heard the morning rung in by the ship's bells to the tune of "All's well"; but Amherst, although not a clever fellow, still kept pace with Bob, and this without extra effort or extra study.

The instructor noticed his excellence in this department, and one day, when the young fellow was in a specially restless state, all his "habits" in full swing at once,

the former called out kindly: "Take it easy, Mr. Amherst; take it easy; you are doing very well, sir."

And after recitation, when Bob waited to ask some question about an apparent discrepancy in one of the velocity tables, Lieut. Ingersoll said:

"That fellow's no dab at Gunnery. It's a pity he can't have a stripe or two. No chance though, I suppose, with such a set of fellows holding the lines."

"Yes, sir," answered Bob, heartily, "he does get on first-rate. I only wish I could do it as easily. Why, Mr. Ingersoll, I declare sometimes I get in a regular blue funk when I think of the examination."

"Nonsense, Mr. Adair!" laughed the young officer. But he remembered it, unfortunately.

Well, the time came, and the fellows worked at their Gunnery papers all day. Bob wrote page after page, and Amherst, who sat next him, did the same, wriggling and twisting meantime as if he had St.

Vitus's dance. Finally, Bob, having rubbed his crisp curls seven ways for Sunday, and told all he knew, closed his desk, folded his paper, handed it in, and went off for a turn in the air, for his head was splitting.

As he walked up and down, Haweis, one of his classmates, came up and said: "Adair, Mr. Ingersoll says you've dropped a page out of your paper."

"Have I?" asked Bob. "I must have stuffed it into my desk with the scraps."

"All right; I'll get it for you," said Haweis, good-naturedly. "You look pretty well used up, and it's as hot as Tophet in there."

"Thanks!" replied Bob. "You're a brick, Tommy."

And that night "Tommy" poked his head in Bob's room, and said: "I didn't know which it was, and grabbed up the lot."

The next morning Mr. Ingersoll came to Bob with a very grave face.

"Mr. Adair, I found this among the papers Mr. Haweis handed me by your request."

"How did it get there, sir?" asked Bob, in surprise; for it was a long list of answers, copied figure for figure from the text-books, and covering the hardest part of the examination.

"I don't know," said Ingersoll sorrowfully; "and I'd rather have cut off my fingers than to have found it; for I shall have to report it."

"Why, you don't think—you don't believe—" stammered Bob, his face flushing scarlet, and then turning deadly white, as the significance of it all dawned upon him, —"you *couldn't* think, Mr. Ingersoll, that I did it, or used it?"

"Personally, I couldn't and wouldn't, Adair. But here's the paper; and as it has fallen into my hands, I simply have to do my duty."

Bob stood stupefied. Before him rushed his boyish aspirations. his joyous youth, his pride in his first uniform, his happy, honorable Academy days, his future, his hopes, his mother; and now this disgraceful sus-

picion, with the blighting, crushing penalty! His heart sent up a bitter cry to God and Our Lady, while a hollow groan burst from his laboring breast.

Lieut. Ingersoll was speaking. "Until the real criminal is found, you stand accused, you know."

"I swear, sir—"

"Adair," said the young officer, stepping nearer, and lowering his voice, "don't waste your time on me. I believe you. But find out who did it, and bring him to taw. I'll hold this up for two days; meantime do your best."

Bob reeled away to his room, half unconscious, and showed such a ghastly face to Robertin that he started to his feet in dismay. "Robert!" he cried, "what is it?" And poor Bob, leaning on that faithful friend, told him.

Robertin's eyes flashed fire, and a mighty rage kindled in his breast. He said nothing, but the chair-back on which his great hand closed tighter and tighter suddenly

split with the force of his grip, and fell clattering to the floor.

"Who sat near you?" he asked, and his voice had a muffled sound.

"Brintnall, Clausmeyer, Burton, Wright, Clinton, Amherst—"

"Ha!" said Robertin, with a snarl so savage that Bob looked up in surprise; "it's he, the coyote!"

"How do you know, Steady?"

"I don't know yet; but I have a clew. And I'll track him; I'll hunt him down till I tear it from his foul heart with my bare hands. I'll—"

The *Angelus* cleft the air. Robertin started, and fell upon his knees. In a few moments he arose, and, by an effort that left him pale, he regained control of himself.

"It came just in time, Robert—Our Lady's summons. If I have done him an injustice, God forgive me; if I have not, then God forgive him and help me; for I can't answer for myself," he muttered.

Then he added, in a louder tone: "Tell me everything—all you know about it."

And Bob began again, and answered every question, but in a stunned sort of a way, patiently going over each point. "That's all, and we must be as close as wax about it; for I begin to feel suspicion stirring in my heart, and 'anger, hatred, and ill-will.' A nice trio, Steady! And if by chance I should say anything to hurt a fellow as I'm hurt, I'd be too mean to ever hold up my head again."

"Come," said Robertin; "there's the call for dinner."

"O Steady, I couldn't eat a mouthful!"

"Brace up, *gars!* You are innocent—"

"So help me God and our Lady!"

"They will too!"

"I believe that. And I say, old man, let's get out to church this afternoon; for I've got to think it over quietly, and that's the best place."

Robertin nodded, and they went to the mess hall, where they were greeted by a volley of chaff, inquiry and comment.

"Bust on Exam., Adair," shouted one; and the joke was so exquisite to his "gang" that they laughed uproariously. For they always backed Bob "as the horse that would win." Robertin checked it somewhat by saying Bob had had bad news; while he, poor fellow, answered as best he could.

Was it imagination that made Bob feel that Amherst was watching him furtively, and that two or three others were whispering together?

"Lord help me!" he thought; "If I get that canker into my mind, it will be as bad as the trouble I'm in."

XIV.

True to his word, Robertin tracked and followed up Amherst, until the latter grew almost distracted, but dared not make a sign. He gleaned nothing, however, until the morning of the third day, when he overheard Amherst telling a party of his chums that he thought Adair was "in for a mess," and he expected some stripes would be floating around without an owner before very long.

"You don't say!" they exclaimed, eagerly. "Isn't that 'one for your heels,' eh?"

Amherst laughed consciously. Then a chorus arose: "I thought he was too good to last!" "I thought he looked awfully down on his luck!" "What's the row, Pollie?"

"'Gouging,' I believe."

"Who said so?" asked a grave, ominous

voice, and Robertin stood before him. Amherst struggled hard for his self-possession; for he felt he had betrayed himself.

"Why, isn't it that, Bruin? You ought to know. I hope I've mistaken," he added; "for Adair's a good fellow."

"No, it isn't that, and *you know it*," said Robertin, marching off, white with rage; for he was on his way to recitation, and could not stop.

"What does the beggar mean by that?" asked one of the crowd.

"Indeed you chaps will have to find out," said Amherst, yawning and turning away. "I have other fish to fry than guessing Kanuck's riddles—low brute!" he added, viciously, between his teeth.

"But I say, Pollie, you haven't settled about to-morrow's chimney-picnic."

"That's so! Well, I'll tell you. It's pretty near Grad., and some of us don't want any more demerits than we've got on hand, eh? (A broad grin ran around the circle.) "The commandant's an old lunatic

about discipline, and one sniff of tobacco smoke gives him the rabies. So, I say, after dinner let's take a boat and sail out a way, smoke our pipes and cigars, and there you are, with nobody the wiser!"

"Good for you!" "Great head!" "Smart boy!" and other compliments greeted his plan; and off sauntered Amherst to get his books, for his section was to be called in a few minutes.

As he turned into his room after recitation he met Robertin.

"Stand!" said the latter, imperiously. "Have you no honor, that you gave tongue to such a lie to-day? How dare you say such things of Adair—Adair, whose shoes you are not fit to brush—"

"Well, really!" replied Amherst, with a sneer, "I was not aware I had applied for the post of boot-black to Adair."

"*Tiens!*" said Robertin, gripping the shoulder near him with a force that left it black for many a day. "No sneers, Amherst, but truth, if you are a man. Why did you put that paper in Robert's desk?"

A quick, flickering light played in the gray eyes for a moment, then he pulled himself together, and with some dignity said:

"That's a serious charge to make, Bruin Major. What proof have you?"

"No proof yet, but I will have it soon. Your nervous habits have been found out" —his keen eyes burnt into Amherst's quaking heart;—"they were just a trick to get at your 'gouges.'"

Amherst grew ghastly white, but, turning his back sharply to the light, he said: "Robertin, I make great allowance for the worry you are in about Adair, but there are certain things I can not allow you or any man to say to me. I don't think anyone would agree with you that I needed 'gouges' in Gunnery. Perhaps"—his smooth voice breaking into malice—"Adair says that, to shield himself."

"Say that again," shouted Robertin, "and I'll break every bone in your body!" And he bore down on him like an avalanche.

Amherst saw the officer of the day coming, so did not give way to the fear that contracted his heart-strings.

"Mr. Robertin, Mr. Amherst! Out of your rooms, and brawling in this unseemly manner!" And he wondered to himself, "What's got into Hercules? His face is distorted out of shape, and his eyes shoot chain-lightning."

"Who began this?" he asked, sharply.

Amherst hesitated, as if he were unwilling to get Robertin into a scrape, but while he did so the latter spoke.

"I, sir."

"I'm sorry to hear it, Mr. Robertin," said the officer,—a kind-hearted, clever fellow—"for it's this sort of thing that loses stripes and double diamonds."

"So much the better," answered Robertin. "Do you suppose, Monsieur, I want to wear them"—plucking passionately at the gold lace—"if Robert's sleeves go empty?"

"Oh, come now!" said Lieutenant Kincaid, good-naturedly—Amherst had passed on—"isn't that going it a trifle too steep?"

"No, Monsieur. Where Robert goes I go. He's more to me than anything. I'd rather follow him into a fokesel, than walk a quarter-deck without him,"—all this in quick blurts.

Just then a marine came up with a telegram, and, as Robertin saluted and moved off, Kincaid read it, and a smile broke over his face as he said: "That lets me out of reporting him. I'm afraid it won't be quite ship-shape" (and it certainly was not), "but I'll risk it; for the poor old chap is evidently off his head, and it's actually his first offence. Besides, that Amherst is a sly lot, and I bet he egged the Kanuck on."

The 'gram read: "Detached. Proceed at once to join *Omaha*, New York." And as it was dated 9.30, the officer argued he was not really on duty when the fracas occurred.

The next morning found the mystery still unsolved. Bob had been notified that on graduation day his diploma would be withheld, and his dismissal would follow in due

order. Sick at heart, broken down by sleepless nights, worn with sorrow, the poor fellow was like a grave, still ghost of his former self. And Robertin was little better; but the bitter storm that had raged in the heart of the latter had been stilled that morning by a visit they had paid to Father Grotius, and by receiving Holy Communion at the early Mass, and only a deep sorrow reigned in its stead. He followed Bob's every movement with wistful, loving eyes, and after dinner said: "Robert, let us sail a while."

"Well," said Bob, listlessly, "as you will, old man."

And they got into a cat-boat, and drifted off before the rose-scented wind.

Shortly following, came the "chimney-picnic"—the smoking party. They were in a "bug-eye," with all sail spread, and were enjoying their forbidden pleasure keenly. They had eaten heartily, and smoked abundantly, and one by one they fell asleep, until only Amherst was left awake. The air

was soft, the sun warm, and the lap of the waves drowsy, and in a little while he too nodded. He started awake two or three times, then finally headed the boat bayward, lashed the tiller in place, and dropped off too.

Crouching on the horizon was a black cloud, with wind in its heart and lightning on its crest; but the boat, full of sleeping youths, swept toward it with bellying sail, and heeling farther and farther to leeward. Suddenly the storm leaped on them, and over she went like a shot.

Roused from their sleep to find themselves struggling in the water, hampered by their clothing, the tempest bursting over their heads in a fury of rain and a glare of lightning, and the bay gone mad with the wind, they gave themselves up for lost, and clung to the boat's keel, face to face with Death and Conscience—and a mighty ugly pair some of the crowd found them.

Meantime Bob and Robertin had spied them, and, at the risk of their lives, put

about, spread a scrap of sail, and raced down to their rescue. As they neared the capsized craft, Amherst was torn from the keel, and swept off, with a white, agonized face, and wildly grasping hands.

"Keep her steady!" shouted Robertin, who had kicked off his shoes, and jerked out of his jacket and vest; and over he went, grasping the hair of the drowning man as he sank. For, although Amherst could swim, he seemed paralyzed with fright.

Meantime Bob shot alongside, and, behold! the squall was over and the sun was out; the tossing water and struggling figures being the only trace of the outburst. He got the fellows inboard, and tacked for Steady, who was leisurely swimming along, towing his "catch."

As they drew near, Robertin sang out: "Here, you fellows, listen!" Then to Amherst: "Did you put that 'gouge' in Robert's desk?"

And he said: "Yes."

Imagine the surprise! But Bob, in an agony of mingled relief and sympathy for the poor coward, whose lie had found him out, begged the fellows to hold their tongues, and turn to at the bug-eye, which they righted, baled out, cleared of the sail and masts, and had in tow when the picket launch from the Academy bore down upon them. The lookout on the *Santee* had seen the "spill," and reported it; so the tired "Mids" went back in fine style. As they neared the wharf, Robertin turned to the two senior members of Amherst's crowd, and said:

"You will meet me at the commandant's as soon as you shift into dry clothes, if you please."

And they nodded prompt and subdued acquiescence.

On the way to their room Robertin, with his arm over Bob's shoulder, said: "That's settled, *gars*."

"Thank God!" replied Bob. "But, O Steady! I'm so sorry for Amherst!"

"Bah! the base— But we will not speak of him."

"How did he happen to tell you?" asked Bob.

Robertin looked a little confused. "He didn't 'happen' at all. I told him I'd let him drown then and there if he didn't tell the truth, and he told it."

"Steady!" said Bob, half imploringly, half amused.

"No, of course I wouldn't, *gars*, but it was neck or nothing."

As he started out, Bob put his hand through his arm, caught step and went too.

"That's right! You ought to have the first of the apology."

"It isn't that," said Bob, "but I've got something I want to say."

"All right."

The four young men rose as the commandant entered his library, and as he looked from one to the other, his heavy eyebrows settled down into a thatch over his eyes.

"You wished to see me, sir?" he said curtly to Robertin. And the latter, "the string of his tongue loosed," for Bob's sake, told his story, which was amply confirmed by Bascom and Carsdale.

The "old man's" face was a study, but he said very little, beyond assuring them that justice should be done in every particular, repeating and emphasizing the last three words in a way that smacked of courts-martial, short shrift, and brisk execution.

Then he shook Bob heartily by the hand, and said: "I am glad, sir, you are cleared; for there are very few young men that could be so illy spared from the service."

Bob asked for a few words in private, and as soon as they were alone went to his point: "I want to ask, please sir, if it is possible to let Amherst off."

"Impossible. His dismissal will be made out at once."

"Yes, sir; but it won't have to be read out on the parade-grounds, before everyone?"

"It ought to be."

"Perhaps, sir, from an official standpoint; but, good God, just think of the agony of it—the horror of it! You see," he added, with quivering lips, "I've lived it over pretty constantly, and I wouldn't want anybody to suffer as I have done."

"Oh! you wouldn't, eh?" said the commandant.

"No, sir," replied Bob; "and, besides, I think it would blast Amherst's whole life. He's very sensitive to blame, and if he got started wrong there's no knowing where he would fetch up."

"Well, really, Mr. Adair, this is rather an extraordinary performance on your part."

"Indeed, sir," said Bob, "it isn't just interfering."

"Didn't say it was," growled the commandant, *sotto voce.*

"You see, when I thought I was going, I wrote to an old sea-captain I know, who is bound for the East Indies, and asked him

if there was any show in the merchant service; for I meant to apply to sail with him. I couldn't have faced—" Here his voice faltered, but he went on after a moment. "I got a letter from him this morning, saying his second mate was down with yellow fever, and if I knew anybody that could tackle the berth, to send him along. Now, sir, Amherst's a good seaman, and maybe if you'd see him, and tell him of the opening, let him resign, and get right away—"

"Why don't you see him yourself?" asked the officer, surveying Bob curiously.

"Well, sir, he mightn't want to see me, and mightn't want to take the place if I gave it. Fellows get queer and streaky sometimes, you know. Then, too, he might think I wanted to be lathery, and—and all that."

"Mr. Adair, let me understand exactly. You want the fellow that came within an ace of ruining your career to get off scot-free, and go into a comfortable and profitable berth that you provide for him?"

"Yes, sir," said Bob.

"Isn't it rather a premium on villainy, and that sort of thing?"

"No, sir," answered Bob; "something a good deal simpler than that—putting myself in his place."

"Very well; I'll think of it."

And I'll say here that when Amherst heard the plan, and learned who was trying to save him, he broke down, and cried a few honest, wholesome tears, and swore a vow to come up to Bob's expectations. And he did, making a good sailor and a faithful officer, until he was swept off the bridge of *The Begum* in a typhoon, and found a grave in Chinese waters.

* * * *

Bob graduated with *éclat*, and Robertin with credit; and if you go down to the Academy, you will find a neat brick house, just outside the gate, in which Bob lives, with his pretty, young wife, and his sturdy

baby boy; for he is now a lieutenant and an instructor.

And every fortnight he and Steady can be met pacing the walks, shoulder to shoulder, or can be seen sitting contentedly together in Bob's home; for, although stationed in New York, aboard the *St. Mary's*, Robertin runs down twice a month to see *ce gars-là*, who is still the dearest thing the world holds for him.

THE END.

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